ONGOING CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Planning, Managing, and Responding

W. Timothy Coombs

Ongoing Crisis Communication

To all those who have managed or endured crises or will encounter crises.

Ongoing Crisis Communication

Planning, Managing, and Responding

Fourth Edition

W. Timothy Coombs

University of Central Florida

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Preface

PURPOSE OF THE TEXT

Crisis management is a challenge any organization can face and one that many fail. When crisis management fails, stakeholders and organizations suffer. All organizations must become prepared for crises. Carnival Cruises, Boeing, and Ikea are prominent and respected companies, but each has recently faced crises and handled them with varying degrees of success. Crisis communication is the life blood of crisis management. When crisis communication is ineffective, so is the crisis management effort. There is a lot of research and many cases about crisis communication. The vast writings about crisis communication and management remain a blessing and a curse. It is great to have so much information, but it is hard to find and organize it all. The writings about crisis communication and management are fragmented, as people write about crises from very different perspectives. This situation can leave managers struggling to organize bits of information or missing critical resources entirely. Writers often focus on their specialties and fail to make connections to ideas and concepts developed in other specialties. In turn, this fragmentation precludes a fuller understanding of crisis communication and management that is gained by integrating the various perspectives. Add to this the fact that a number of related communication concepts have applications to crisis management but have yet to be integrated into the literature, and the situation becomes even more complicated. Practitioners, researchers, and educators are limited by this fractured approach. The primary purpose of this book is to provide a resource that integrates and organizes a wide array of practitioner and research writings about crisis management.

The emphasis throughout the book is on the role of communication in the crisis management process. Management in general must recognize the value of strategic crisis communication and the value of crisis management. This book emphasizes the role of communication throughout the crisis management process and is designed to be a body of knowledge that aids managers, researchers, and educators. *Process* is an important word here. Too many people think that crisis management means having a crisis management plan or responding when a crisis hits. This is a very reactive and rather limited approach to crisis management. A richer, more proactive approach to crisis management explores the entire process. Managers should think of crisis management as akin to SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Through crisis management, organizations identify that the weaknesses are what an organization is failing to do to address threats and prepare for crises. Strengths are the elements of crisis management an organization does well. Opportunities are the resources an organization can access before, during, and after a crisis. Threats are those factors that can evolve into crises.

A quick crisis SWOT analysis will awaken management to the need to take crisis management and crisis communication very seriously.

AUDIENCE FOR THE TEXT

The book is written for both students and practitioners. Students, primarily undergraduate, are given an applied approach to crisis communication that is rooted in theory. Ideally theory should inform practice, and I have selected the best of the crisis communication and management research for gaining insight into the process. Practitioners can use the book to enhance their understanding and execution of crisis communication. This book is designed to be used to help those who are or may become crisis managers. Any individual with a background in corporate communication, organizational communication, public relations, or management may find themselves on a crisis team. The information in this book should help to make a person a more effective crisis team member.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

Throughout this preface I have mentioned the crisis management process. Crisis management can be viewed as having three stages: precrisis, crisis event, and postcrisis. The book follows this three-part structure. Chapter 1 provides a discussion of the three-stage approach to crisis management. Chapter 2 highlights the increased importance of social media to crisis management. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the prevention aspect of precrisis, while Chapters 5 and 6 develop the preparation aspect of precrisis. Chapters 7 and 8 concentrate on the crisis event stage, and Chapter 9 explains the postcrisis stage. The epilogue considers how communication technology and globalization will influence the future development of crisis communication and reflects on the key insights the book provides.

PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES

Throughout the book are "What would you do?" cases. Each case fits the key points found in a particular chapter. Information from a real crisis event is presented along with a series of questions designed to allow readers to apply text concepts to the case.

In this new edition, "Crisis Leadership Competencies" boxes are introduced in every chapter. These boxes highlight the essential leadership skills needed to manage crisis communication effectively in a wide range of situations.

Each chapter ends with a Conclusion that sums up the main points of the chapter as well as Discussion Questions that help readers extend their understanding of the material.

NEW TO THE FOURTH EDITION

Writing a fourth edition of this book was necessary because crisis communication and management is so dynamic that the field has changed significantly in the few years since the third edition. Researchers continue to yield additional insights into the crisis management process. Social media continues to be a challenge for crisis communication. Managers must learn to understand both the utilities of social media in a crisis and the potential of social media to create crises. Researchers have expanded our understanding of crisis communication by developing ideas such as a double crisis and the need to consider the multiple voices that might try to communicate about the crisis. The fourth edition tries to capture the more complex view of crisis communication the emerges from research and translate that material into accessible and usable information for practitioners.

The main changes to the fourth edition are outlined here:

- Chapter 1 draws distinctions between disasters and organizational crises.
- Chapter 2 develops the differences between traditional and social media crises. There is an extended discussion of the different types of social media crises and the communicative demands each one creates.
- Chapter 3 identifies the increasing role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in crisis management and how activists are increasingly utilizing "private politics" in attempts to influence corporate behavior by creating potential crises.
- Chapters 4 adds the concept of red flags (specific warning signs to consider when scanning) and the increased use of sentiment analysis in crisis scanning.
- Chapter 5 notes the emerging role of the social media manager on the crisis team and the relationship between training and improvisation.
- Chapter 6 revises the discussion of the crisis management plan to focus on the basic components and not just a list of commonly used elements. There is also a more developed discussion of templates for predrafted messages and the need to connect the crisis management plan (CMP) with social media plans.
- Chapter 7 reinforces the role importance of being able to sell a crisis in an organization with the leadership competencies.
- Chapter 8 offers new sections on the objectives and targets for crisis communication. There are also extended discussions of the utility and dangers of the denial and apology crisis response strategies.
- Chapter 9 expands the discussion of memorials and their relationship to crisis communication.
- Finally, the epilogue again summarizes the key insights from the book while also anticipating the demands that globalization and communication technology will place on the immediate future of crisis communication.

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CHAPTER 1

A Need for More Crisis Management Knowledge

The cruise ship Costa Concordia hits a rock and sinks, BP's Deepwater Horizon oil spill kills 11 workers and creates environmental havoc in the Gulf of Mexico, Enron hides financial losses from stakeholders and goes bankrupt, the cruise ship Carnival Triumph is stranded at sea with no power, Boeing Dreamliner has battery problems and is grounded, and the 9/11 attacks killed roughly 3,000 people. These are all reminders that no organization is immune to crises. If no organization is immune, then all organizations should be prepared. Pick any day of the week and you will find stories about train derailments, plane crashes, funds used inappropriately at nonprofit organizations, explosions in manufacturing facilities, workers shot or injured on the job, or E. coli–tainted beef, turkey, chicken, or even bean sprouts. The bottom line is that all organizations should learn as much as they can about crisis management.

Developing a comprehensive crisis management program (CCMP) that captures the ongoing nature of crisis management is not an easy task. The crisis management process is varied and requires the integration of knowledge from such diverse areas as small-group decision making, media relations, environmental scanning, risk assessment, crisis communication, crisis plan development, evaluation methods, disaster sociology, and reputation management. A diverse set of crisis management writings must be navigated in order to develop a complete CCMP that covers every stage and substage of the crisis management process. It is a daunting but necessary task to sort through the plethora of crisis management information. How else can a CCMP be developed?

The primary goal of this book is to offer an integrative framework that simplifies the task of organizing crisis management knowledge. An ongoing approach based upon a three-stage model of crisis management provides the foundation. The three stages are precrisis, crisis event, and postcrisis, each of which is composed of three substages. The stages are used to summarize and organize various insights into the crisis management process. Myriad ideas from different areas are synthesized into one continuous process. The end product is a guide for developing each stage in the ongoing crisis management process. This book is a living guide because future developments in crisis management can be easily assimilated into the comprehensive framework of the three-stage approach.

The three-stage model articulated here provides a variety of suggestions about how to

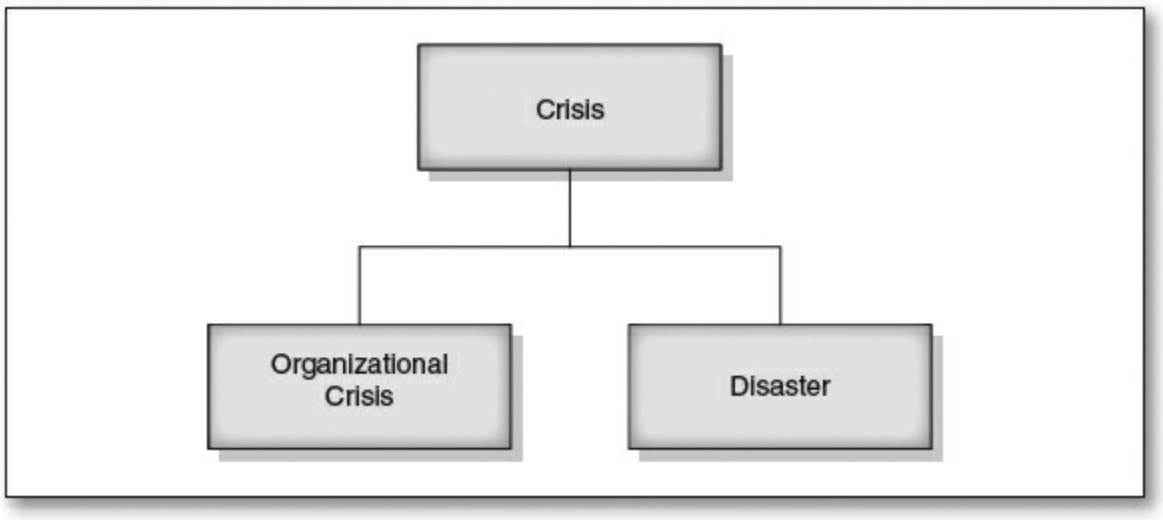
"do" crisis management. This book is designed to aid those interested in practicing, researching, or teaching crisis management. To those interested in practice, the book offers a comprehensive approach for structuring a crisis management program. For those interested in research, the book provides an analytic framework for the study of crisis management efforts. Those involved in teaching are offered an additional resource for educating future crisis managers. The book ends with a summary of key ideas and highlights some of the insights offered to practitioners, researchers, and educators. In addition, an appendix suggests a number of crises that can be used for study and research.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT DEFINED

There are a lot of books written about crisis management, but there is no one accepted definition of a crisis. Having a specific definition is important because how a subject is defined indicates how it is approached. I choose to start with a definition so that readers will understand how this book approaches the subject.

Crisis is a very broad term that is used frequently by practitioners and academics. A general definition of crisis is some breakdown in a system that creates shared stress (R. W. Perry, 2007). Such a general definition can be applied to a wide variety of events. It is important that early on in the book I specify what I mean by the terms *crisis* and differentiate it from similar concepts. Figure 1.1 is a visual representation of how I conceptualize crisis. We can take the general notion of crisis as the starting point, beneath which we have disaster and organizational crisis. There are volumes written about both disasters and organizational crises, but there is no one accepted definition of either term. It is important to draw a distinction between the two concepts in order to clarify how this book approaches the topic of crisis.

Figure 1.1 Types of Crises



Disaster Defined

Disasters are events that are sudden, seriously disrupt routines of systems, require new courses of action to cope with the disruption, and pose a danger to values and social goals (Quarantelli, 2005). This is more a set of characteristics than a definition but does capture the nature of disasters. I would add that disasters are large in scale and require response from multiple governmental units. Disasters can spawn organizational crises. For instance, an organization may need to cope with the effects of the disaster on its operation. An example would be utilities needing to restore power to customers following a tornado. In rarer circumstances a crisis can trigger a disaster. Examples include the Union Carbide toxic gas release in Bhopal, India, and the crude oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico when the Deepwater Horizon sank. Research has generated a significant amount of advice on how to cope with disasters, and there is some overlap between disasters and organizational crisis efforts. However, this book focuses on organizational crises. I choose to present a very specific definition of organizational crisis to clarify for the readers how this book will approach crises.

Organizational Crisis Defined

A crisis is the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders related to health, safety, environmental, and economic issues, and can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes. This definition is a synthesis of various perspectives on crisis. It tries to capture the common traits other writers have used when describing crises.

A crisis is perceptual. What we typically think of as crises are events that are easy to perceive as such. That is why few people would dispute industrial accidents or hurricanes being crises. However, it is the perceptions of stakeholders that help to define an event as a crisis. A stakeholder is a person or group that is affected by or can affect an organization (Bryson, 2004). If stakeholders believe an organization is in crisis, a crisis does exist, and stakeholders will react to the organization as if it is in crisis. For nearly a decade, the automobile manufacturer Audi told its customers there was nothing wrong with its transmissions. However, customers did perceive a crisis because a few cars were jumping into gear from neutral—with sudden acceleration—resulting in injuries and deaths. We fast-forward to 2009, and Toyota was wrestling with gas pedals that stick, causing cars to accelerate uncontrollably and at times fatally. Toyota was criticized for a slow response to the crisis. Toyota management had a difficult time seeing the problem and realizing the organization was in a crisis. Management must be able to see the event from the stakeholders' perspective to properly assess whether a crisis has occurred.

A crisis is unpredictable but not unexpected. Wise organizations know that crises will befall them; they just do not know when. Crises can be anticipated. Crises strike suddenly, giving them an element of surprise or unpredictability (Barton, 2001; National Research

Council, 1996). But some crises offer a great deal of warning (Irvine & Millar, 1996). For instance, if a major television news magazine is planning to run a negative story about an organization, management will know the event months in advance. Metabolife, a diet supplement company, faced just such a crisis in 1999. It used the lead time to create an aggressive multimedia campaign to defend itself from charges linking its product to harmful side effects. Radio and newspaper advertisements were used to drive people to a specially created website where people could watch an unedited video of the interview and learn how news shows can distort the truth.

Crises can violate expectations that stakeholders hold about how organizations should act. These expectations can be related to health, safety, environmental, or economic concerns. Planes should land safely, products should not harm us, management should not steal money, and organizations should reflect societal values. Crises disturb some stakeholder expectations, resulting in people becoming upset and angry, which threatens the relationship between the organization and its stakeholders. That is why crises are considered dangerous to organizations' reputations (Barton, 2001; Dilenschneider, 2000). A reputation is how stakeholders perceive the organization. When expectations are breached, stakeholders perceive the organization less positively: The reputation is harmed.

The difference between incidents and crises illustrates the meaning of *serious impact*. An *incident* is a minor, localized disruption. Say a water valve breaks and sprays water in the vending and meeting areas of a plant. The valve is repaired, some meetings are rescheduled, and vending machines are down for a day. The valve is replaced without harming the larger organizational routine, making it an incident, not a crisis. If the broken water valve leads to the plant being shut down, then it becomes a crisis as it disrupts the entire organization (Coombs, 2006b; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). A crisis disrupts or affects the entire organization or has the potential to do so.

Crises also have the potential to create negative or undesirable outcomes. If business is disrupted, an organization will usually suffer financial losses (e.g., lost productivity, a drop in earnings). Crisis damage extends beyond financial loss, however, to include injuries or deaths to stakeholders, structural or property damage (on and off site), tarnishing of a reputation, damage to a brand, and environmental harm (Loewendick, 1993). The damage can affect a variety of stakeholders. A plane crash can kill crew members, passengers, and people on the ground. In addition, an entire industry can be affected by a crisis in one of its member organizations. An industry can suffer financial loss (e.g., new, costly regulations) or reputational damage as people project a localized crisis onto an entire industry. In 2006, the cruise ship industry became involved in the Carnival Cruise Lines fire because the crisis was an industry-wide threat, not just a company-specific one. Fires were a risk on every cruise ship, and people needed to feel safe. Employees, customers, or community members can be injured or killed by industrial or transportation accidents.

Environmental damage is another outcome of accidents. Community members can suffer structural or property damage from accidents as well. Explosions can shatter

windows, and evacuations can cost community members in terms of money, time, and disruption. Careless handling of an accident can add to the damage. Investors can lose money from the costs of the crisis. For example, an organization can incur repair expenses from an accident, while a faulty product can result in product liability lawsuits and recall costs. A crisis presents real or potential negative outcomes for organizations, their stakeholders, and their industries. Crisis management is designed to ward off or reduce the threats by providing recommendations for properly handling crises.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

BP and Texas City

It's 1:20 p.m. on March 23, 2005, in Texas City, Texas. You work at the BP refinery in the town. Suddenly an explosion rocks the ground. You go outside and see large flames and smoke coming from the direction of the isomerization unit. You know that workers were performing a startup at the isomerization unit today, and startups are one of the most dangerous procedures at refineries. Alarms are going off, people are running and shouting, and some personnel are heading over to help. You are the public relations person on the BP Texas City crisis team. What do you do now? What does the organization need to do to respond to this event?

Crisis Management

Crisis management represents a set of factors designed to combat crises and to lessen the actual damage inflicted. Put another way, it seeks to prevent or lessen the negative outcomes of a crisis and thereby protect the organization, stakeholders, and industry from harm. Crisis management has evolved from emergency preparedness and, drawing from that base, comprises a set of four interrelated factors: prevention, preparation, response, and revision.

Prevention, also known as mitigation, represents the steps taken to avoid crises. Crisis managers often detect warning signs and then take actions designed to prevent the crisis. For instance, a faulty toaster is recalled before its overheating problem causes any fires or injuries to customers. Prevention is largely unseen by the public. News stories about crises that did not happen are rare.

Preparation is the best-known factor in crisis management because it includes the crisis management plan (CMP). If people know nothing else about crisis management, they know an organization should have a CMP. The CMP is the tip of the crisis management iceberg. Although people think the CMP is the crisis management process, in actuality most of the process is unseen. Preparation also involves diagnosing crisis vulnerabilities,

selecting and training a crisis management team and spokespersons, creating a crisis portfolio, and refining a crisis communication system.

Response is the application of the preparation components to a crisis. A crisis can be simulated (as in an exercise) or real. The preparation components must be tested regularly. The testing involves running simulated crises and drills that determine the fitness of the CMP, crisis team members, spokespersons, and the communication system. A real crisis involves the execution of the same crisis management resources, only the outcomes are real rather than hypothetical. Response is very public during an actual crisis. An organization's crisis management response is frequently reported and critiqued in the news media (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Many publications critiqued Bausch & Lomb's failure to recall ReNu with MoistureLoc when it was linked to a 2006 outbreak of Fusarium keratitis, a form of fungal eye infection that can produce blindness (Dobbin, 2006; Mintz & Di Meglio, 2006). Bausch & Lomb did stop shipping the product and eventually asked retailers to remove the product from shelves. However, it was not until May 15, a month after the crisis began, that an official recall was issued (Mintz & Di Meglio, 2006). Remember, crises make for good news stories, and news of ReNu with MoistureLoc was everywhere.

In an actual crisis, responses seek to achieve outcomes related to reducing the negative impact of a crisis on stakeholders and the organization. Put another way, the response helps to achieve the objectives of crisis management. Organizations try to limit the threat to public safety, reputational erosion, brand damage, and loss of sales, to name but a few of the common crisis communication objectives. There is even a chance that the response leads to an improved organization. Improvements can include a stronger reputation, a more powerful brand, and changes to the organization that make it a safer place to work.

Part of the response is *recovery*, which denotes the organization's attempts to return to normal operations as soon as possible following a crisis. *Business continuity* is the name used to cover the efforts to restore operations to normal. As noted earlier, downtime from a crisis is a financial drain. The quicker an organization can return to normal operations, the fewer financial losses it will incur.

Revision is the fourth crisis factor. It involves evaluation of the organization's response in simulated and real crises, determining what it did right and what it did wrong during its crisis management performance. The organization uses this insight to revise its prevention, preparation, and response efforts. Ideally, in the future the right moves are replayed while the mistakes are avoided and replaced by more appropriate actions. Revision is the development of an institutional or organizational memory, which can improve the effectiveness of crisis management by expanding the organization's perception of crises and its response capacity (Li, YeZhuang, & Ying, 2004; Weick, 1988). The more and varied the crises an organization experiences through practice sessions, the better it can handle similar situations in reality. The factors are linked in a spiral. If prevention fails, preparation is required for optimal performance. Revision is derived from performance and informs both the prevention of and preparation for future crises. In turn, improving preparation should

improve response.

Understanding the crisis management process is a necessity for effective crisis communication. We can extend the notion of process by creating a framework for crisis management that involves distinct stages that influence one another.

THE INITIAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The idea that crises have an identifiable life cycle is a consistent theme that permeates the crisis management literature. The crisis manager needs to understand this life cycle because its different phases require different actions (Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1995; Sturges, 1994). The crisis life cycle has been translated into what I term *staged approaches* to crisis management. A staged approach means that the crisis management function is divided into discrete segments that are executed in a specific order. Moreover, the life cycle perspective reveals that effective crisis management must be integrated into the normal operations of an organization. Crisis management is not merely developing a plan and executing it during a crisis. Instead, it is appropriately viewed as an ongoing process. Every day, organization members can be scanning for potential crises, taking actions to prevent them, or considering any number of the aspects of the crisis management process detailed in this book. Crisis management should be a part of many people's full-time jobs in an organization, not a part-time fancy. Each working day, crisis managers can be doing something to improve crisis prevention and response (Coombs, 2006a).

The life cycle perspective has yielded a variety of staged approaches to crisis management. These provide a mechanism for constructing a framework for organizing the vast and varied crisis management writings and for creating a unified set of crisis management guidelines. Regardless of discipline, the various topics addressed can be placed within a comprehensive, incremental approach to crisis management. An overarching framework organizes the scattered crisis management insights and permits crisis managers to easily envision their best options during any stage of the process. Crisis managers can find it easier to access and apply available resources, thereby improving the crisis management process. The framework I use in this book is influenced by existing models of the process. Reviewing these models will reinforce the importance of process in crisis management.

Past Staged Approaches to Crisis Management

Three influential approaches emerge from a study of the various crisis management models. Influence was gauged by the number of people citing the approach in the development of their crisis models. These three are Fink's (1986) four-stage model, Mitroff's (1994) five-stage model, and a basic three-stage model. Fink's is the earliest and can be found in his seminal book, *Crisis Management: Planning for the Inevitable.* His cycle

is well represented in writings that have appeared since the 1990s. He uses a medical illness metaphor to identify four stages in the crisis life cycle: (1) prodromal: clues or hints of a potential crisis begin to emerge; (2) crisis breakout or acute: a triggering event occurs along with the attendant damage; (3) chronic: the effects of the crisis linger as efforts to clean up the crisis progress; and (4) resolution: there is some clear signal that the crisis is no longer a concern to stakeholders—it is over.

Fink's (1986) approach is one of the first to treat a crisis as an extended event. Of particular note is his belief that warning signs precede the trigger event. The job of crisis managers expands and becomes more proactive when they know and read the warning signs. Well-prepared crisis managers do not just enact the CMP when a crisis hits (being reactive); they are also involved in identifying and resolving situations that could become or lead to a crisis (being proactive). In addition, Fink divides the crisis event into three stages. A crisis does not just happen, it evolves. It begins with a trigger event (acute phase), moves to extended efforts to deal with the crisis (chronic phase), and concludes with a clear ending (resolution). The different stages of the life cycle require different actions from the crisis manager. As a result, crisis management is enacted in stages and is not one simple action.

Sturges's (1994) elaborations on Fink's (1986) model illustrate how different actions are required during various crisis phases. Sturges proposes that different types of communication are emphasized during the various phases of the crisis life cycle. The acute phase is dominated by the eruption of the crisis. Stakeholders do not know what is happening; therefore, they require information about how the crisis affects them and what they should do to protect themselves. For example, information such as whether community members should evacuate an area or whether employees should report for the next shift is highly relevant. In contrast, the resolution stage sees the end of the crisis. At that point, stakeholders would be receptive to messages designed to bolster the organization's reputation. Stakeholders need to know how a crisis affects them when it breaks but are open to reputation-building messages once it ends (Sturges, 1994). The demands of the crisis stage dictate what crisis managers can and should be doing at any particular time. The later chapters of this book detail the different actions required during the various stages.

The second influential approach is from prolific crisis writer and expert Ian Mitroff (1994). He divides crisis management into five phases: (1) signal detection: new crisis warning signs should be identified and acted upon to prevent a crisis; (2) probing and prevention: organization members search known crisis risk factors and work to reduce their potential for harm; (3) damage containment: a crisis hits and organization members try to prevent the damage from spreading into uncontaminated parts of the organization or its environment; (4) recovery: organization members work to return to normal business operations as soon as possible; and (5) learning: organization members review and critique their crisis management efforts, thereby adding to the organization's memory.

While subtle differences are apparent, the similarities between the Fink (1986) and

Mitroff (1994) approaches are strong. Mitroff's stages reflect Fink's crisis life cycle to a large degree. Signal detection and probing can be seen as part of the prodromal phase. The difference is the degree to which Mitroff's model emphasizes detection and prevention. While Fink's model implies that crises can be prevented, Mitroff's model actively identifies them, seeking to prevent them.

There is a strong correspondence between the damage containment and crisis breakout stages and the recovery and chronic stages. Both damage containment and crisis breakout focus on the trigger event—when the crisis hits. However, Mitroff's (1994) model places greater emphasis on limiting the effects of the crisis. Augustine (1995) and Ammerman (1995) both highlight the need to limit the spread of a crisis to healthy parts of the organization. The recovery and chronic stages reflect the natural need to restore normal operations. In fact, one measure of success for crisis management is the speed with which normal operations are restored (Mitroff, 1994). Mitroff's model emphasizes how the crisis management team can facilitate the recovery, while Fink's (1986) model simply documents that organizations can recover at varying speeds.

Both the learning and resolution stages signal the end of the crisis. The additional review and critique of the learning stage is a function of Mitroff's (1994) focus on crisis management rather than just crisis description. Fink's (1986) model simply notes that the resolution stage occurs when a crisis is no longer a concern. For Fink, termination marks the end of the crisis management function. In contrast, Mitroff's model is cyclical because the end also represents a new beginning. The crisis management effort is reviewed and critiqued in order to find ways to improve the system. The last stage signals the start of implementing improvements in the crisis management system. Hence, the learning phase can feed back to either the signal detection phase or the probing and prevention phase. Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt (1995, 1996) extend Mitroff's thinking by treating the final stage as a continuation of the recovery phase. In addition to evaluation and retooling, the final stage involves maintaining contact with key stakeholders, monitoring the issues tied to the crisis, and providing updates to the media (Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1995, 1996). Communication and follow-up with stakeholders from the recovery phase are carried over to the learning phase.

The essential difference between the Fink (1986) and Mitroff (1994) models is revealed by comparing the last phases. Mitroff's is active and stresses what crisis managers should do at each phase. Fink's is more descriptive and stresses the characteristics of each phase. This is not to say that Fink is not offering recommendations to crisis managers. Rather, the Mitroff model is more prescriptive than Fink's. Fink is concerned with mapping how crises progress, while Mitroff is concerned with how crisis management efforts progress. Early models tended to be descriptive, so this essential difference is not unexpected.

The three-stage model has no clearly identifiable creator but has been recommended by a variety of crisis management experts (e.g., Birch, 1994; Guth, 1995; T. H. Mitchell, 1986; Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003). However, Richardson (1994) provides the first detailed

discussion of its components: (1) precrisis or predisaster phase: warning signs appear and people try to eliminate the risk; (2) crisis impact or rescue phase: the crisis hits and support is provided for those involved in it; and (3) recovery or demise phase: stakeholder confidence is restored.

Following from this three-stage approach, I divide the crisis management process into three macrostages: precrisis, crisis, and postcrisis. The term *macro* indicates that the stages are general and that each contains a number of more specific substages: the micro level. This is similar to economics, where macroeconomics deals with all the forces at work on the economy while microeconomics deals with specific factors. Both the Fink (1986) and Mitroff (1994) models fit naturally within this general three-stage approach. The precrisis stage encompasses all of the aspects of crisis preparation. Prodromal signs, signal detection, and probing would be included in the precrisis stage. The crisis stage includes the actions taken to cope with the trigger event—the time span when the crisis is being actively dealt with. Damage containment, crisis breakout, and recovery or the chronic phase all fall within the crisis stage. The postcrisis stage reflects the period after the crisis is considered to be over or resolved. Learning and resolution are each a part of this stage. Table 1.1 summarizes the comparisons of the three different staged approaches to crisis management.

Table 1.1 Comparison of Staged Approached to Crisis Management

Fink	Mitroff	Three-Stage
Prodromal	Signal detection Probing and prevention	Precrisis
Crisis breakout	Damage containment	Crisis
Chronic	Recovery	
Resolution	Learning	Postcrisis

OUTLINE OF THE THREE-STAGE APPROACH

The three-stage approach was selected as the organizing framework for this book because of its ability to subsume the other staged approaches used in crisis management. The ideal crisis management model would accommodate all of the various models plus additional insights provided by other crisis management experts. Not all crisis managers have placed their ideas within a phased model. Therefore, a comprehensive model must be able to place random insights into the crisis management process.

The three-stage approach has the appropriate macro-level generality for constructing the comprehensive framework necessary for analyzing the crisis management literature. The three stages are general enough to accommodate the other two dominant crisis management models and to allow for the integration of ideas from other crisis management experts.

Within each stage there are separate substages or sets of actions that should be covered

during that stage. Each substage integrates a cluster of writings about that particular crisis management topic. Each cluster of writings has been carefully examined to distill the essential recommendations they could offer to crisis managers. For each substage, the crisis wisdom and any tests of that wisdom are reported along with a discussion of its utility to crisis managers. Moreover, this three-stage approach provides a unified system for organizing and utilizing the varied insights crisis managers offer.

Precrisis

The precrisis stage involves three substages: (1) signal detection, (2) prevention, and (3) crisis preparation. Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 are devoted to the development of this stage. Organization members should be proactive and take all possible actions to prevent crises. The precrisis stage entails actions to be performed before a crisis is encountered. However, not all crises can be prevented, so organization members must prepare for crises as well.

Chapter 3 deals with signal detection. Most crises do emit early warning signs. If early action is taken, these crises can be avoided (Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1995). Crisis managers must identify sources for warning signs, collect information related to them, and analyze the information. For example, a pattern in customer complaints could identify a product defect. Reporting the complaints to the appropriate manufacturing sector of the organization could result in corrective action being taken. In turn, the corrective action could prevent further complaints and the potential of a highly visible recall, battle with customers, or both. Crisis managers must develop a system for detecting potential crises and responding to them.

Chapter 4 is devoted to crisis prevention. Once the potential is detected, actions must be taken to prevent the crisis. Preventative measures fall into three categories: issues management, risk management, and reputation management. Issues management means taking steps to prevent a problem from maturing into a crisis. Risk management eliminates or lowers risk levels. Reputation management seeks to resolve problems in the stakeholder-organization relationship that could escalate and damage the company's reputation. Chapters 5 and 6 develop the idea of crisis preparation. Crisis managers must be prepared for a crisis happening. Preparation typically involves identifying crisis vulnerabilities, creating crisis teams, selecting spokespersons, drafting CMPs, developing crisis portfolios (a list of the most likely crises to befall an organization), and structuring the crisis communication system.

Crisis Event

This stage begins with a trigger event that marks the beginning of the crisis. The crisis stage ends when the crisis is considered to be resolved. During the crisis event, crisis managers must realize that the organization is in crisis and take appropriate actions. This

phase has two substages: (1) crisis recognition and (2) crisis containment. Communication with stakeholders is a critical facet of this phase. An organization communicates to stakeholders through its words and actions.

Chapter 7 is devoted to crisis recognition. People in an organization must realize that a crisis exists and respond to the event as a crisis. Crisis recognition includes an understanding of how events get labeled and accepted as crises—how to sell a crisis to management—and the means for collecting crisis-related information. Chapter 8 covers the crisis response and includes topics related to crisis containment and recovery. Crisis containment focuses on the organization's crisis response, including the importance and content of the initial response, communication's relationship to reputational management, contingency plans, and follow-up concerns.

Postcrisis

When a crisis is resolved and deemed to be over, an organization must consider what to do next. Postcrisis actions help to (a) make the organization better prepared for the next crisis, (b) make sure stakeholders are left with a positive impression of the organization's crisis management efforts, and (c) check to make sure that the crisis is truly over. Chapter 9 addresses evaluating crisis management, learning from the crisis, and other postcrisis actions, such as follow-up communication with stakeholders and continued monitoring of issues related to the crisis.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Carefree Cruise Line: Act 1

It is Friday a little after 5 p.m. in Miami, Florida, the location of the headquarters for Carefree Cruise Lines. The majority of your cruise ships have the Carefree brand, but your company also owns a number of smaller cruise lines, what can be called sub-brands. A call comes in that a cruise ship in one of the sub-brands is in distress. The ship is off the coast of Italy, and that is a 6-hour time difference from your headquarters in Miami. The call notes that a Mayday has been issued and that the ship is being evacuated. You are the public relations personnel assigned to the crisis management team for Carefree Cruise Lines.

- What are you first thoughts after receiving this call?
- What do you need to do to help your organization prepare to respond to this crisis?
- Who are the key stakeholders in this situation?
- What actions should your organization take?

- How should the organization communicate those actions to key stakeholders?

IMPORTANCE OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The first paragraph of this chapter offers a reminder that crises are ubiquitous. In fact, today's environment seems to be placing higher premiums on crisis management; unprepared organizations have more to lose today than ever before. A variety of developments has made all types of organizations more susceptible to crises. In turn, a higher premium is placed on crisis management, as mismanagement costs seem to escalate. Managers have identified the following as common negative effects from crises: decrease in revenue, cutbacks and/or layoffs, loss of corporate reputation, increased media scrutiny, increased government scrutiny, decreased share price, and increased social media discussions (*Reputation in the Cloud Era*, 2011; *Rising CCO IV,* 2012). The developments that increase the need for effective crisis management are an increased value of reputation, stakeholder activism through communication technologies, broader views of crises, and negligent failure to plan.

Value of Reputations

As late as the 1990s, writers were still debating the value of reputation. A reputation is evaluative, with organizations being seen as having favorable or unfavorable reputations (Coombs & Holladay, 2005). There is a strong consensus in the practitioner and academic writings that a reputation is an extremely valuable intangible organizational resource. Favorable reputations have been linked to attracting customers, generating investment interest, attracting top employee talent, motivating workers, increasing job satisfaction, generating more positive media coverage, and garnering positive comments from financial analysts (Alsop, 2004; Davies, Chun, da Silva, & Roper, 2003; Dowling, 2002; Fombrun & van Riel, 2004; Y. Kim & Yang; 2013; van Riel, 2013). An impressive list of key stakeholders that control resources vital to an organization's success is represented here (Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999). A reputation is built through the direct and indirect experiences stakeholders have with the organization (Aula & Mantere, 2008; Fombrun & van Riel, 2004). Positive interactions and information about the organization build favorable reputations, while unpleasant interactions and negative information lead to unfavorable reputations. A crisis poses a threat to reputational assets (Barton, 2001; Davies et al., 2003; Dilenschneider, 2000; *Reputation in the Cloud Era*, 2011). As greater emphasis is placed on reputation, a corresponding emphasis must be placed on crisis management as a means of protecting reputational assets (Coombs & Holladay, 2002).

Stakeholder Activism

Today, angry stakeholders are more likely to generate crises (*The Changing Landscape of Liability,* 2004). Consumers, shareholders, employees, community groups, and activists are becoming increasingly vocal when dealing with organizations and are using the Internet to voice those concerns (Coombs, 2002; Heath, 1998). The Internet provides various means of stakeholder expression, including web pages, discussion boards, blogs, microblogs, social networks, and content-sharing sites. The key feature of these Internet channels is the ability of users to create the content rather than just the organizations. Collectively, the Internet channels where stakeholders create the content are called *social media*, although the term *stakeholder media* is also being used to denote channels where users create the content (Hunter, Le Menestrel & de Bettignies, 2008). Chapter 2 explores the concept of social media in greater depth. The vast majority of social media messages never find an audience. However, when disgruntled stakeholders strike a responsive chord and connect with other stakeholders online, a crisis can occur. These crises evolve from the value of the organizational reputation. Legitimate criticism that spreads among stakeholders poses a direct threat to the organization's reputation. Here's an example: The Gap planned to release a revamped logo in 2010. When the initial design was released on its website, groups of vocal stakeholders responded negatively online. Gap's Facebook page and a Twitter account designed to protest the change were the most visible sources in the protest. The idea of a new logo was generating massive amounts of negative online comments for the Gap. The company then announced they had heard their stakeholders and would not make the change (Halliday, 2010). This demonstrates how social media has the potential to create a crisis or the threat of a crisis.

Activist groups are using the Internet to organize and to pressure organizations to change their behaviors. Social media is part of a mix of pressure tactics, along with negative publicity campaigns and boycotts. For instance, the Enough Project utilized Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and Instagram in its efforts to pressure electronics companies into disclosing their sourcing of conflict minerals. The Internet has the potential to increase the power of activist groups, thereby making them audible to managers and on an organization's agenda for consideration (Coombs, 1998, 2002; Heath, 1998; T. Putnam, 1993). Consider how Greenpeace was able to pressure Puma, Nike, Adidas, H&M, C&A, Mango, Zara, Li-Ning, Levi's, Esprit, Victoria's Secret, G-Star, Raw, Valentino, and Benetton into agreements to eliminate their suppliers' use of certain toxic chemicals in the production of textiles. Or how concerns over environmental issues in Europe encouraged Chiquita to change how it grows bananas in Central and South America. Partnering with the Rainforest Alliance, Chiquita has had 100% of its banana farms certified as Better Banana Grower (*"Corporate Conscience Award" presented to Chiquita,* 2003).

Communication Technologies

The discussion of stakeholder activism demonstrates one of the ways advances in communication technologies has begun to shape crisis management. These advances make

the transmission of communication easier and faster. Another way to think about communication technologies is that they make the world more visible. Events that would have gone unnoticed a decade ago are now highly visible. There are no remote areas of the world anymore. The 24-hour news networks, or even just concerned individuals, have the opportunity to reveal crises, complete with video clips. Moreover, crises are now global, thanks to communication technologies. Because news is global, news of an event in an isolated area of Africa appears rapidly around the world. Organizations no longer have isolated crises because the once remote or far-flung areas of the world are accessible to the media and to other stakeholders. A crisis may appear on CNN or some other international news service or be the subject of a website. On April 24, 2013, a garment factory in Bangladesh collapsed. The tragic event killed over 1,000 people. Videos and stories of the collapse appeared on CNN, BBC, and numerous other online news outlets and through social media (Alam, 2013). Due to online posting by activists, people easily could learn that H&M, Zara, Walmart, and the Gap all use suppliers in Bangladesh and that Primark had suppliers housed in the collapsed building (Engel, 2013). In addition, activists and corporations used various Internet channels to explain whether various corporations were taking actions designed to improve worker safety in Bangladesh. Crises are now more likely to be seen by the world thanks to advances in communication technologies. We will return to the international nature of crises in the epilogue.

Broader View of Crises

Prior to the horrific events of September 11, 2001, most organizations were focused on their own little world. Crisis management was driven by what might happen to them on their sites. However, 9/11 showed that attacks or events at other locations can affect your organization. An event does not have to be a major terrorist event to create collateral damage. An explosion at a nearby chemical facility can create a need to evacuate and close your facility. An airplane crash may prevent vehicles from reaching your offices or plant.

Consequently, organizations are now broadening their view of crises to include nearby facilities that could create crises for them. A second way that the 9/11 attacks have broadened the view of crisis management is the increased emphasis on security and emergency preparedness. Security is one element of prevention and mitigation. Spending and managerial focus on security spiked dramatically after 9/11 and continue to stay high on the list of managerial priorities. While driven by terrorism concerns, security can help with other crises, such as workplace violence. In addition, the security focus has been coupled with the recognition of the need for emergency preparedness. Organizations should be prepared for an evacuation or to provide shelter-in-place, the two basic emergency responses. Emergency preparedness will help organizations with any crisis they face, not just with terrorism (Coombs, 2006b). The tragic events of 9/11 have been a wakeup call to crisis managers to expand their view of crisis management. The expectation is that this broader view will serve organizations well by saving lives in future crises.

Social media has added another layer to broadening the view of crises. Managers are very sensitive to the fact that crisis threats, especially those that damage reputations, can emerge and grow rapidly online. In a study by Burson-Marsteller and Penn Schoen Berland, 55% of managers felt social media had increased their vulnerability to crises (*Reputation in the Cloud Era,* 2011). There is an increasing need to monitor social media and to decide how to integrate it into the crisis response. Later chapters will elaborate on how social media is creating changes in crisis communication.

Negligent Failure to Plan

Organizations have long been considered negligent if they did not take reasonable action to reduce or eliminate known or reasonably foreseeable risks that could result in harm. This liability is based on the 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act (Headley, 2005). The scope of foreseeable risks is expanding to include workplace violence, industrial accidents, product tampering, and terrorist attacks (Abrams, n.d.). This new area of liability is known as *negligent failure to plan* and is closely tied to crisis management. Organizations can be found legally liable if they did not take precautions to prevent potential crises and were not prepared to respond. Both crisis prevention and crisis preparation serve as defenses against negligent failure to plan. Juries are already punishing organizations that are not engaging in proper crisis management (Blythe & Stivariou, 2003; Headley, 2005). Crisis management is becoming firmly established as a form of due diligence (efforts to avoid harm to others or to the organization) that will protect an organization not only from the immediate harm of a crisis but from secondary harm resulting from lawsuits.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP: AN OVERLOOKED RESOURCE

Leadership is often overlooked in discussions of crisis management and crisis communication (James & Wooten, 2010). Leadership can be defined as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 1997, p. 3). During a crisis, leadership can have a major impact on the effectiveness of the crisis management effort. Good leaders regularly are called upon to solve problems, follow plans, and to craft visions. These behaviors are all valuable during a crisis. Crisis leadership experts Erika James and Lynn Wooten (2010) argue that crisis leadership is a frame of mind. Good crisis leaders are willing to learn, are open to new ideas, and believe the organization will emerge stronger after the crisis. Crisis leadership is unique because the leaders are being watched by stakeholders (in public view) and are under pressure to utilize shortcuts that will make the crisis disappear but could be ineffective in the long run (James & Wooten, 2010). Each chapter in this book will have a leadership box that highlights how the topic in the chapter relates to effective crisis leadership. Those insights are based on the crisis leadership competencies developed by James and Wooten.

CONCLUSION

As the potential for crises increases, so does the potential for negative outcomes. Organizations are playing for high stakes when confronting crises. The developments just reviewed demonstrate that the need for crisis management is increasing, not decreasing. The value of crisis management is greater now than when experts first began preaching about the need for crisis preparedness in the late 1970s. The end result is a higher premium on effective crisis management. Organizations must continue to improve their crisis management processes. Crisis management acts as a hedge against the negative outcomes of crises. Effective crisis management can protect lives, health, and the environment; reduce the time it takes to complete the crisis life cycle; prevent loss of sales; limit reputation damage; preclude the development of public policy issues (i.e., laws and regulations); and save money. Today's operating environment demands that organization be prepared to manage crises.

Generally we experience crises through the news media and the Internet. As a result, it is easy to view crisis management as a short-term process and crisis managers as having few demands on their time. However, what the public sees of the response to a crisis is a small part of crisis management. Effective crisis management is ongoing. Crisis managers continually work to reduce the likelihood of a crisis occurring and to prepare the organization for the day when a crisis does occur. Moreover, crisis managers carefully dissect each crisis in order to improve prevention, preparation, and response. An appreciation of the phases of crisis management helps people better appreciate the complexity and ongoing nature of crisis management and communication.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some arguments managers would use against implementing a crisis management system?
2. Do you agree or disagree with the idea that a crisis is perceptual?
3. What do you think makes an event a crisis? How do crises differ from disasters?
4. What alternatives are there to a staged approach to crisis management?
5. Some people question the value of precrisis activities. What reasons do you see that argue for and against precrisis activities?

CHAPTER 2

Effects of the Online World on Crisis Communication and Crisis Management

As I talk to crisis managers in the United States, Europe, and Asia, the topic that draws the most interest is social media. There is a keen desire to understand the various ways social media and online communication in general influence crisis communication. Because of this interest, online communication is highlighted in this early chapter as well as being incorporated through the remainder of the book. This interest is due in part to the word *revolution,* which is frequently used in reference to online communication and crisis communication. Revolution does capture your attention and sells people on seminars for improving crisis communication, but it is an overstatement. It is more appropriate to think of the Internet as hastening the evolution of crisis communication. Let's start by refining what we mean by the Internet. The Internet is many communication channels, not just one. These channels include websites, discussion boards, blogs, microblogs, chat rooms, Listservs, image sharing, and social networking sites, to name but a few. Internet communication channels emphasize the interactive and interconnected nature of the Internet. For instance, Twitter, a microblogging service, is often hailed for its ability to facilitate interactivity between organizations and stakeholders (Saffer, Sommerfeldt, & Taylor, 2013). Users can find information, connect with other users, and express their concerns more easily with the Internet than with traditional communication channels. We should remember that people did essentially the same communication tasks prior to the Internet. However, it took more time, effort, and resources to accomplish them.

The Internet is an important evolutionary step in crisis communication, rather than a revolution. Crisis managers still face the same needs to identify warning signs, confront the same basic communication demands, utilize the same concepts, and must enact effective strategic responses. Crisis managers need to identify warning signs in order to prevent crises and/or limit the damage from an emerging crisis. What has changed is how the information is collected and, in some cases, how that information is processed. Crisis managers are faced with the demand to create a quick and accurate response. What has changed is what constitutes "quick" and how that initial response is delivered. Crisis management plans (CMPs) and crisis teams still make up the heart of the crisis management effort. What has changed is how CMPs are stored and accessed and how team members interact with one another (see Chapters 5 and 6). Crisis managers must weight key crisis factors and devise an appropriate and effective crisis response. What has changed are the ways of identifying

critical crisis information and how their messages are delivered. As early as 2001, it was estimated that 25% of all crises involved the Internet (Herbst, 2001). This chapter highlights key ways in which the Internet is affecting crisis communication and crisis management. Many of these will be developed further in later chapters.

Let's begin with a short discussion of the online environment, which provides the context for appreciating this environment's effects on crisis communication. I'll then highlight the effects of social media on crisis communication organized by the three phases of crisis management.

THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT: MULTIPLE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

We cannot have a discussion about the Internet's effects on crisis communication and management without first discussing the online environment itself. This will be a very basic discussion given that crisis, not the online environment, is the focus of this book. Organizations entered the online world, and thus created an online presence, with the use of web pages. Taylor and Kent (2007) led the initial research investigating whether and how websites were used in a crisis. They observed how important it was to incorporate web sites into crisis communication efforts as more and more stakeholders were utilizing this channel during a crisis (Taylor & Perry, 2005). Practitioners have embraced this advice, though many organizations still make no mention of a crisis on their websites. Websites, however, were just the beginning of the online communication tools that would shape current crisis communication and management thinking.

Websites generally reflect Web 1.0 rather than Web 2.0. Web 2.0 refers to applications that promote user-generated content, sharing of that content, and collaboration to create content. Web 2.0 promotes interaction and allows users to create web content (O'Reilly, 2005). Corporate websites primarily distribute content (Web 1.0) rather than promote the creation and sharing of content. Web 2.0 was the foundation for social media. Social media is a collection of online technologies that allow users to share insights, experiences, and opinions with one another. The sharing can be in the form of text, audio, video, or multimedia (Safko & Brake, 2009). Social media is responsible for the growing link between crisis communication/management and the online world. Social media is an evolutionary stimulus because users, not organizations or the traditional news media, now control the creation and distribution of information. Users bypass the traditional information gatekeepers. It is important to refine our understanding of social media before exploring its effects on crisis communication/management.

Social media is a collection of online communication channels/tools that share five common characteristics: (1) participation: anyone can create and give feedback on content; (2) openness: most social media permits people to post content and feedback; (3) conversation: it facilitates two-way interaction; (4) communities: groups with similar

interests can form quickly; and (5) connectedness: there is heavy use of links to other content (Voit, n.d.). Note how interactivity is the key factor connecting the five characteristics. These characteristics are self-explanatory, but community warrants further attention. One of the original qualities of the Internet that attracted public relations people was the way online communities formed. *Online communities* can be defined as groups of people with similar goals or interests that connect with one another and exchange information using web tools (Owyang, 2007). Social media has increased the speed and ease with which online communities form. Online communities can be collections of important stakeholders for an organization. The comments and actions of these communities, in turn, can have a significant effect on an organization. Negative online comments can threaten valuable reputational assets (Oneupweb, 2007). That potential to affect organizations is what makes online communities and social media so important to crisis communication/management. An example will help to illustrate the point.

On May 6, 2010, Pampers, a product of Procter & Gamble, issued a news release with the title *Pampers Calls Rumors Completely False*. Here is an excerpt from the news release that summarizes the situation:

> Jodi Allen, Vice President for Pampers, said, "For a number of weeks, Pampers has been a subject of growing but completely false rumors fueled by social media that its new Dry Max diaper causes rashes and other skin irritations. These rumors are being perpetuated by a small number of parents, some of whom are unhappy that we replaced our older Cruisers and Swaddlers products while others support competitive products and the use of cloth diapers. Some have specifically sought to promote the myth that our product causes "chemical burns." We have comprehensively and thoroughly investigated these and other claims and have found no evidence whatsoever that the reported conditions were in any way caused by materials in our product. Independent physicians, highly respected in the field, have analyzed our data and have confirmed our conclusions." (para. 1)

Parents were making online comments that Pampers' new version of its product was harming infants. That is a serious charge for a company trying to sell diapers to parents. Parents do not want to buy a product that will hurt their children. Social media (e.g., blogs, microblogs, social networking sites) were the route for spreading the "rumor." The popular social networking site Facebook is a prime example of social media fanning the rumor. A discussion thread on a Pampers page appeared, claiming that Pampers created severe diaper rash, which even included blistering. The Facebook page had over 10,000 members, many of whom were parents who posted their concerns and experiences on the page. Pampers has its own Facebook page with over 100,000 fans, and even that page had parents posting stories of bad reactions to new Pampers under the discussion heading "New Pampers are HORRIBLE!" (the discussion thread is no longer available online). Pampers responded to those concerns. Here is an exchange (with the names changed):

Debbie: I know I'm going to get a lot of flak for this, but oh well. I want to let people know my experience.

I've been using Pampers on my daughter since she was born in Oct. 08. I never had a problem with them and LOVED them.

The softness of them was what made me use them at first. Then it was the absorbancy. My daughter has sensitive skin and everything else made her breakout besides Pampers and Huggies. And I didn't like Huggies because of the stiffness.

When the new Pampers came out Sarah was wearing the Cruisers and I had no clue they changed. I bought a box and it looked EXACTLY the same as the ones I was buying before. When we opened the box to start using them we noticed right away that they were different. They were REALLY thin and didn't feel as soft, but I tried them anyway.

Sarah started getting rashes RIGHT away. And when I say rashes, I mean REALLY BAD rashes. I change her right when I notice she's gone. Usually a minute or two after she's gone because I know her cues. Her rashes were blistering and bleeding. And when I'd get them to clear up they'd come right back. I started asking around and found out a LOT of people were having the same problem with their children.

We switched over to Huggies Little Movers and Huggies Overnight and we haven't had rashes like that since.

To the pampers people: You REALLY need to look into this. This is NOT an isolated problem. It's happening to a LOT of parents.

Pampers: Hi Debbie. You definitely won't get flak from us for sharing your experience. We appreciate it, but I'm just so sorry to hear about Sarah's rashes, as well as Maria's children and Bridget's baby.

Please do understand that we thoroughly evaluate our diapers to ensure they are safe and gentle on your little one's skin. Although I'll be passing this information along to our Health & Safety Division, I really hope that you, Bridget, and Maria get in touch with us directly at 1-866-586-5654. We're available M–F, 9–6, EST.

Shelley—I'll be sure to share your feedback with our Quality Control Team. We'd love you to give them another try since you had trouble with the tabs. Just get in touch with us at the same number and we can offer some help.

Pampers was reaching out to people expressing their concerns via social media. Pampers even held a summit with four influential "mommy bloggers," women who blog about consumer products intended for family use: Renee Bigner, Kate Marsh Lord, Tiffany Snedaker, and Stephanie Manner Wagner. The summit was a chance for Pampers and

independent experts to provide information about the situation and to dispel the rumor. The four bloggers agreed that after the meeting they had greater confidence in the diapers (Sewell, 2010). Managers do consider negative information appearing in social media as legitimate threats to the reputations of the organizations, the reputation of products, and the sales of those products. In other words, social media can be a warning sign for a problem that has the opportunity to grow into a full-scale crisis.

Social media is a broad term that covers a variety of different online communication tools. Developing a comprehensive list of social media is like trying to count sand on the beach. New tools keep emerging, so you cannot have a complete and comprehensive list. But we can construct a system for categorizing the various types of social media. A category system is functional for crisis communication. By understanding how the different categories can be used in crisis communication, crisis managers can understand how to use any of the individual tools within the category. There are many different ways to categorize social media. Table 2.1 presents a synthesis of various lists along with definitions of the categories. True to the interconnected nature of the Internet, the categories are often used in combination with one another, making it appear as though they overlap. However, each category does have distinctive features that separate it from the others. They all possess the basic ability to share information and opinions with other users.

Table 2.1 Social Media Categories

Social networks	Individual websites from which people share content and communicate with friends (Examples: Facebook, MySpace, Bebo)
Blogs	Online journals where people post content and others can comment on it
Wikis	Web pages where people work together to create and edit content (Example: Wikipedia)
Podcasts	Audio and video content created and distributed through a subscription-based service (Example: The Executive Lounge with Andrew Coffey)
Forums	Online discussions revolving around specific interests and topics
Content communities	Places where people organize themselves around specific content that they create and comment on (Examples: YouTube, Flickr)
Microblogs	Sites on which people share small amounts of information through posts (Example: Twitter)
Aggregators	Tools that collect content (e.g., news stories, blogs) from different sites in one site; content is frequently ranked by popularity and can include comments from users (Example: Reddit or Popurls)
Social bookmarking	Tool with which people share and rate content they have found online (Example: Delicious)

It is important to realize that social media is dominated by user-created content. This means stakeholders are accustomed to being in control. It follows that basic ideas from traditional media relations do not and should not be applied. It is easy to find online rants about how public relations people pitch bloggers just like they pitch the traditional news

media. Social media is about interaction and control, not being fed information. I make this point because crisis communicators must be savvy if they are to use social media strategically. Keep in mind that the primary value of social media is *listening* to what stakeholders are saying, not in sending them information, and providing *access* to information when stakeholders might need it. Listening and access will be used to illustrate the potential value of social media to crisis managers by coupling it with the steps of crisis management.

Refining the Conceptualization of Crisis

In Chapter 1, I defined the term *crisis*. I noted that the when the book uses this term, it is referring to organizational crises. With the advent of consumer-generated content delivered via social media, it is important to refine how we conceptualize crisis. Figure 2.1 illustrates how an organizational crises can be divided into two larger categories, traditional and social media crises. Traditional crises focus more on issues of public safety and welfare along with disruptions of organizational operations. I call this traditional because the development of crisis management was designed around these vary types of crises. We will return to the discussion of traditional crises in Chapter 5.

Figure 2.1 Traditional and Social Media Crises

Social media crises can be defined as events that can harm an organization and arise in or are amplified by social media (Owyang, 2011). Social media crises focus more on reputational concerns. Conway, Ward, Lewis, and Bernhardt (2007) labeled the reputational threats from stakeholders *Internet crisis potential*. That does not mean a social media crisis may not have a public safety or welfare component. However, the bulk of social media crises concerns reputation. Similarly, traditional crises will have a reputational aspect but primarily are about public safety and welfare. Reputational concerns are important because an organizational reputation is a valued asset that must be cultivated and

protected.

Even the concept of social media crisis is too broad. There are different types of social media crises. One way to differentiate social media crises is by the origin of the crisis. The origin of the crisis is important to understand because it helps to determine the threat posed by the crisis and best options for responding to the crisis. Figure 2.2 provides two different views of organizing social crises by source of the crisis. In most cases, social media crises are really paracrises but have the potential to become actual crises.

An organizational misuse social media crisis is when an organization violates the norms of behavior in a particular social media channel. An example is when Gap used the hashtag #Sandy to encourage online shopping during Super Storm Sandy. Another is when an employee at the Red Cross talked about drinking beer with the hashtag #gettngslizzerd. The most effective response is to apologize for the error and, if possible, indicate how it will not happen again. It is also good to have a sense of humor when the mistake seems unintentional. For instance, the Red Cross tweeted, "We've deleted the rogue tweet but rest assured the Red Cross is sober and we've confiscated the keys." Donations to the Red Cross went up after the incident (Nason, 2011). An organizational misuse social media crisis can escalate when the "mistake" is considered intentional and a blatant violation of ethical practices.

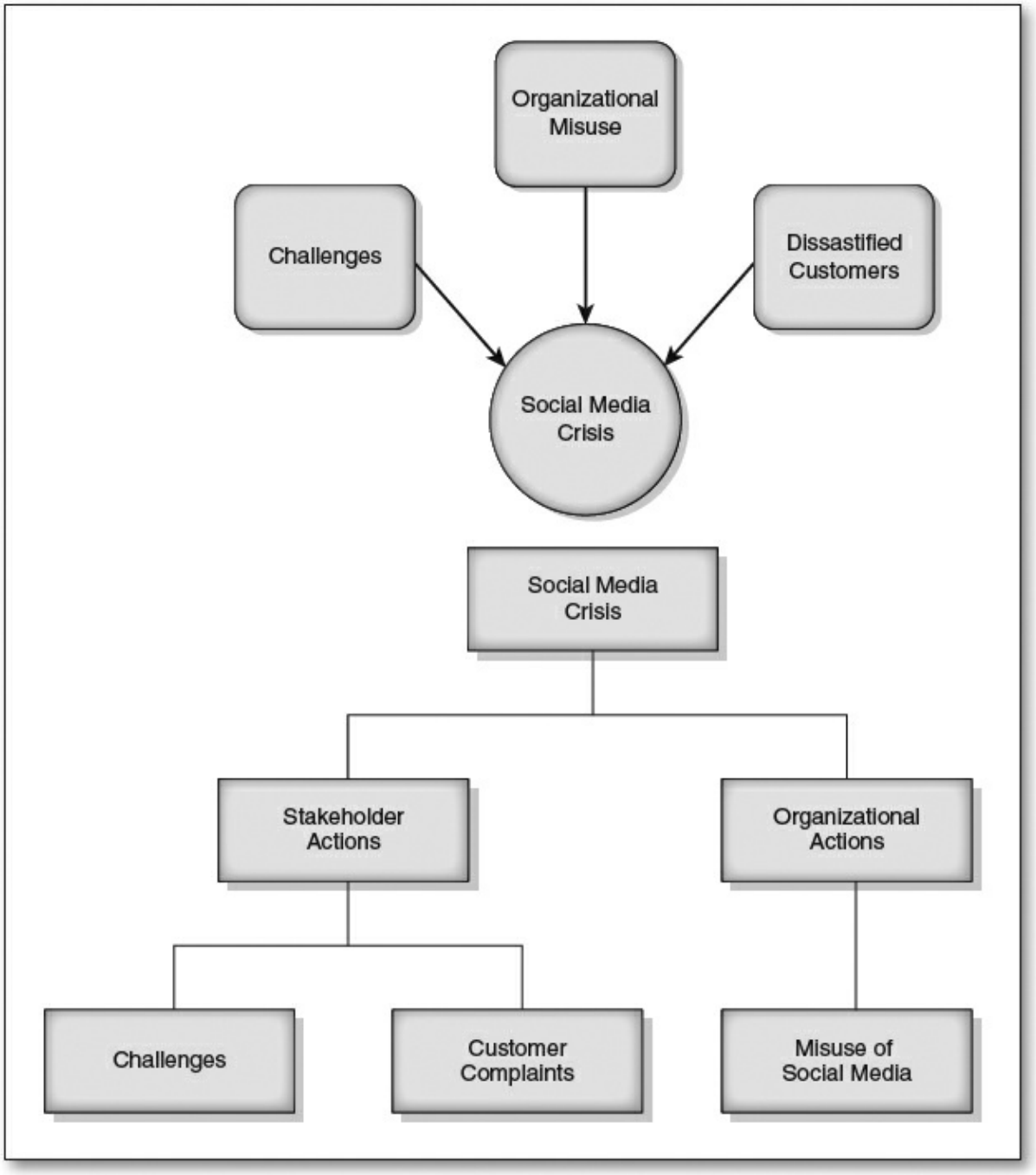
Dissatisfied customer social media crises are really a customer relations problem rather than a crisis. Many companies now use social media as part of their customer service. Dissatisfied customers may emerge spontaneously or be part of an organized effort. When McDonald's asked people to use the hashtag #McDStories to share their fond memories of McDonald's, many people used the hashtag to tell their horror stories instead. McDonald's is an example of spontaneous outpouring of customer dissatisfaction. During Christmas of 2012, Starbucks paid to sponsor the projection screen at the temporary skating rink at the Natural History Museum in London. The screen projected tweets about Starbucks with the hashtag #SpreadTheCheer. A group called UK Uncut used the hashtag to express their displeasure at the exceedingly low amount Starbucks pays in UK taxes. To make matter worse, the filter designed to prevent obscene tweets from appearing failed, exposing the children to some rather off-color language (Morse, 2012). Starbucks is an example of an organized effort and also relates to the final category of social media crises: challenges. The response is to work to resolve the complaint—engage in effective customer services practices. A dissatisfied customer social media crisis could be an early warning of a product harm situation (a traditional crisis) if customers are reporting similar product failures or problems.

Challenges are when stakeholders perceive that an organization's behaviors and/or policies are inappropriate or irresponsible (Lerbinger, 1997). The core of the challenge is that stakeholders argue that the organization is acting irresponsibly. Those charges can erode reputations. Reputations are built on meeting stakeholder expectations (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004). Hence, violating stakeholder expectations harms reputations (Finet, 1994).

Reputations are valued organizational assets that managers seek to build rather than damage (Davies, Chun, da Silva, & Roper, 2003). The challenge is a negative reflection on the organization that serves to tarnish its reputation.

Obviously the notion of challenge is very vague. Coombs (2010c) offers a more precise view of challenges by identifying three types of challenges: (1) organic, (2) expose, and (3) villain. The different challenge types have implications for crisis communication. The nature of the challenge impacts the how the reputation is affected and how best to respond to the challenge. An organic challenge results from an organization losing touch with changes in stakeholder values and interests. Over time, stakeholder values and beliefs can change. In turn, stakeholders expect organizations to reflect those new values and beliefs. An excellent example of the shift in values and beliefs is the concern stakeholders have for the treatment of workers in the garment industry supply chain. If organizational behaviors do not change to mirror those of the stakeholders, stakeholders will perceive the organization as violating their expectations. The misalignment of expectations can be a natural process because organizations often lag behind stakeholder expectations (value and belief changes). Consider how Nike was targeted for sweatshop abuses among suppliers when stakeholder values about workers in the supply chain shifted. An organic challenge seeks to bring the misalignment to the attention of management.

Figure 2.2 Source and Types of Social Media Crises



An expose challenge arises when stakeholders prove an organization's words are inconsistent with its actions. An example would be charges of "greenwashing" when an organization claims to be environmentally friendly while devoting little time or resources to improving the environment. Stakeholders call managers for their overstatement of action on social or environmental concerns with an expose challenge. An expose challenge creates the impression of organizational malice. Managers seem to be purposefully overstating the organization's social and environmental performance. Managers seem to be pretending to meet stakeholder expectations, and that is more harmful to a reputation than simply not recognizing that an expectation exists.

The villain challenge is one in a series of arguments between an organization and a specific group of stakeholders. The stakeholders are generally professional activist groups that have a long-standing dispute with an organization. The villain challenge is simply one more battle in the larger war. The stakeholders hope to portray the organization as a villain that needs to reform its evil ways. To those outside this personal war, the villain crisis may seem like noise and be dismissed as "those two going at it again" (Coombs, 2010c).

Managers have four strategies that can be used in response to challenges: (1) refutation, (2) repression, (3) reform, and (4) repentance. These strategies are based on how institutions typically respond to attempts to influence their decision-making processes (Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen, 1993). The refutation strategy attempts to invalidate the challenge. One option is to prove the organization is actually meeting stakeholder expectations. Managers must provide evidence to demonstrate they are meeting expectations but stakeholders were simply unaware of their actions. Another option is to question the validity of the expectations. Managers argue that the expectation is not widely shared and not one that the organization should seek to meet. The position is that the expectation can be ignored because it is only relevant to a small number of stakeholders. This option requires managers to show how these stakeholders are out of step with the majority of their stakeholders. Refutation can increase damage from a challenge if stakeholders can prove the organization is lying about meeting the expectations or that others do not care about the expectations—then an expose challenge occurs. However, there are times when refutation is appropriate because the challenge is wrong or reflects the views of only a very limited number of stakeholders (the expectation is illegitimate). For instance, a villain challenge can be characterized as being of concern only to the attacking small stakeholder group proposing the challenge.

The repression strategy seeks to prevent stakeholders from making others aware of their challenge. Lawsuits and other forms of intimidation can be used in attempts to silence challengers (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Repression is a dangerous option because it precludes the free exchange of ideas and creates the impression of censorship. Other stakeholders may react negatively to the repression strategy, creating a backlash against the organization.

The reform strategy acknowledges there is a violation of expectations and explains how the organization is trying to meet those expectations. Managers will legitimize stakeholder expectations and seek to alter the organization's behaviors to reflect these expectations. The reform strategy fits well with an organic challenge. The response reflects the organization's lag in understanding and responding to stakeholder expectations.

The repentance strategy is when management admits its claims were exaggerated and is working to meet the expectations the organization had already claimed to be meeting. The repentance strategy fits with the expose challenge. The key element of repentance is admitting to the wrongdoing. However, this admission can make matters worse before making them better. Stakeholders can be angered by the organization's initial deception (P.

H. Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004). Repentance is a long-term investment. It will take time for the organization to prove it is actually meeting expectations and not just talking a good game (N. Smith, 2008).

Challenges are unique and complex social crises. Responses to a challenge crisis can be more varied than any of the other crisis types to be discussed in Chapter 5. Managers have a variety of response options, but must carefully assess the nature of the challenge before selecting a response strategy. Organic, expose, and villain challenges have unique features that make different response strategies more or less effective.

EFFECTS ON CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Social media has a variety of effects on crisis communication. The three stages of crisis management provide a useful framework for organizing the discussion of these effects. This section reviews key effects that will be discussed in later chapters.

Precrisis

Listening is what scanning for crisis warning signs is all about. Social media provides an opportunity for finding warning signs generated by stakeholders. Blogs, microblogs, content communities, social networks, forums, aggregators, and social bookmarking are all excellent scanning tools for crisis managers. The challenge is wading through the vast amounts of information to locate emerging trends that appear ready to develop into crises, a point we will return to in Chapter 4. Not every online statement or video is really a potential crisis. However, the nature of the Internet is that ideas from seemingly unimportant sources can spread rapidly, thereby creating the potential for a crisis. This concern is rooted in the big-seed approach to viral messages.

The big-seed approach is used in contrast to the small-seed notion of how ideas spread on the Internet—how a message becomes viral. The small-seed concept argues that only a few influential people need to spread the message for an idea to emerge online (Thompson, 2008). Duncan Watts, a network researcher at Yahoo, has used computer modeling to show that average people are the most likely source for a successful viral message. In the big-seed approach, a large number of people (seeds) are targeted with the initial message. There is a mass effort to reach a broad spectrum of the target audience rather than identifying a few influentials. Watts and Peretti (2007) argue that any individual from the mass audience can create the viral spread of a message. Hence, crisis managers cannot just monitor what influential stakeholders are saying but must be attuned to a wide array of stakeholders. It is helpful at this point to introduce the idea of a paracrisis.

The term *para* means resembling or protection from something. A paracrisis resembles a crisis because it threatens the organization's reputation and related assets. However, a paracrisis would not require the activation of the crisis team and does not disrupt the

organization. Still, a paracrisis warrants attention because neglect or mismanagement could create an actual crisis. A paracrisis is a specific type of crisis warning sign. It mimics a crisis itself. Motrin's offensive ad to mothers is an example of a paracrisis. In 2008, Motrin created an edgy ad that noted how mothers have back pain from using sling-type baby carriers. The ad was in print and online in video form. Many mothers were offended by it and took to social media to express their outrage. Twitter was a popular location for mothers to attack Motrin. There was even a 9-minute YouTube video featuring the Twitter complaints. The ad appeared online on a Saturday morning. The social media criticism stormed Twitter by Saturday evening. On the following Monday, McNeil Consumer Healthcare, the maker of Motrin, removed the ad from the Internet and replaced it with an apology (Tsouderos, 2008). McNeil Consumer Healthcare did not see any disruption in the production or sale of Motrin. There was minor damage to the corporate and product reputation that had the potential to escalate if the paracrisis was not handled swiftly and effectively. By removing the ad and apologizing, McNeil Consumer Healthcare managed the paracrisis, thereby defusing a potential crisis.

Paracrises that emerge in social media are unique crisis warning signs because they appear in full view of stakeholders. Typically, crisis prevention efforts are invisible to stakeholders. For instance, organizations revise safety procedures or replace a dangerous chemical to reduce the threat of hazardous chemical releases. Visibility is what gives a paracrisis its impact. The public appearance of the paracrisis demands public management. Managers must explain to all stakeholders what is being done to address the concern or why they are choosing to ignore it. The paracrisis blurs the line between precrisis and crisis response because addressing the paracrisis can appear to be a crisis response rather than preventative action. The key point here is that social media increases the visibility and number of paracrises because the Internet can highlight the stakeholder concerns that drive paracrises. As one white paper on social media and crisis recommended, "never ignore conflict/crisis on social media" ("Crisis Management for Social Media," n.d., p. 4; IR Insight, 2012).

Crisis Response

It is very easy to find an online webinar or physical seminar where "experts" will tell you how to use the online environment to manage a crisis. The "selling" of online crisis communication creates the illusion that traditional media no longer matter. In fact, overusing online crisis communication is a dangerous delusion. Media selection must be driven by your target audience. Crisis managers select communication channels that effectively and efficiently reach the desired target audience. If online channels are relevant to your stakeholders during a crisis, then add online channels to the mix. However, crisis managers must integrate the online and traditional communication channels into a seamless and consistent crisis response (Wehr, 2007). Above all, crisis managers must use online channels strategically rather than just because someone said they should (Oneupweb, 2007).

I argue that there are four basic rules when using online crisis communication channels: (1) be present, (2) be where the action is, (3) be there before the crisis, and (4) be polite. *Be present* means that crisis managers should not hide from the online world. Stakeholders, including the news media, will look to the corporate website and existing social media activities of an organization for information. If the crisis is never mentioned in the organization's online communication, the absence will be noticeable. The organization will be criticized for being silent and miss the opportunity to present its interpretation of the crisis. Chapter 8 will return to the importance of presenting the organization's side of the crisis.

Be where the action is refers to using the online origins of the crisis as one location for the crisis response messages. If the crisis began as a YouTube video, then YouTube should be one of the places where the crisis response appears. Domino's Pizza followed that advice when its CEO posted an apology on YouTube after a disgusting video of Domino's employees supposedly tampering with food was posted on YouTube. If the crisis breaks on Facebook, then the organization's Facebook page should address the crisis. Will the CEO's message about the crisis be popular or viewed as much as the crisis-inducing video? Will the organization have as many favorable comments as its critics do? The answer is clearly "no," but placing the message in the source channel increases the likelihood of people encountering your message along with the crisis-inducing message.

Be there before the crisis means that implementing a social media push after a crisis is less effective than if the organization was already utilizing social media. Social networking sites, blogs, and microblogs are most effective when there are followers—people viewing the content regularly. Having an existing presence builds credibility and authenticity for your crisis messages. When American Airlines and Southwest Airlines had to ground planes for safety inspections, both used blogs to discuss the problem. Prior to the crisis, Southwest had a popular blog called Nuts About Southwest. American had no blog. Southwest used its blog to help inform passengers and answer their questions. There were quickly over 140 responses after the first crisis post by Southwest. When American started a blog after the crisis, stakeholders did not know about it and virtually no one accessed it. American did nothing to promote the blog, including no link from its corporate website. Eventually American dropped the blog. American's experience demonstrates that arriving late to the social media game is problematic (Holtz, 2007). However, there is still value in starting to use social media after a crisis because of the need to be where the action is. Crisis managers must never forget the strategic aspect of the crisis response (Martine, 2007). The nature of the crisis plays a critical role in strategic choices about the selection of social media options to deliver a crisis response, a point developed in Chapter 8.

Be polite is the final point but is the most important when communicating via social media. Organizations should never be rude even if a stakeholder is trying to provoke them in social media. "Trolls" purposefully try to rile an organization, while angry stakeholders may post "mean" comments about an organization. Being subject to harsh criticism is part

of the price for being in social media. Rude responses will escalate and make the situation worse. Another part of being polite is following the rules of social media, a point reinforced by the earlier discussion of organizational misuse social media crises. To be effective, crisis communication must conform to rules of whatever social media channel it is using (Agnes, 2012).

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Burger King Hack

You are a corporate communication specialist at Burger King with responsibility for social media efforts. On a Monday at 11:00 a.m. you notice a problem with the company's Twitter account. The Burger King logo has been replaced by the McDonald's logo. There is a tweet that claims Burger King has been sold to McDonald's. A number of rather obscene and offensive tweets then appear under @BurgerKing. They are clearly not the type of messages you want associated with your brand. You realize your Twitter account has been hacked.

1. Is this a crisis or a paracrisis? What leads you to that conclusion?
2. What would you do next to try to prevent reputational damage from this hack?
3. Who would you need to contact to complete the actions you identified in your answer to Question 2?

Postcrisis

Stakeholders may still require follow-up information and updates after the crisis is officially over. Social media provide another channel for delivering the updates and addressing specific follow-up questions stakeholders may have. Crisis managers will need to determine how long to keep special crisis web pages or blogs operational. One criterion would be to decommission such sites when interest wanes. Managers may want to move past the special crisis pages and blogs as another sign that the crisis is over. That is when social media can be valuable. Microblogs, such as Twitter, provide excellent outlets for updates and to answer lingering questions. If people begin following the organization during the crisis, the microblog can post updates that will reach interested stakeholders. Moreover, microblogs have the capacity to answer questions if the answer is, in the case of Twitter, 140 characters or less. Regular corporate blogs and social network pages provide opportunities for posting updates and responding to questions, too. Social media provides channels for reaching stakeholders who are still looking to engage the organization about crisis issues in the postcrisis phase, a point covered in Chapter 9.

CONCLUSION

This chapter began by noting that the Internet is speeding, rather than revolutionizing, the evolution of crisis communication. I argue for evolution because the Internet, especially social media, helps crisis managers execute existing communication-related tasks rather than creating the need for entirely new ones. But crisis managers would be engaging in malpractice if they did not integrate social media into their activities. For instance, social media places a greater demand on scanning while providing more tools for accomplishing the task. Social media is important enough to crisis communication to warrant a separate chapter to highlight its impact. Social media is both a benefit and a liability to crisis communicators (Kerkhof, Shultz, & Utz, 2011; Mei, Bansal, & Pang, 2010). As noted earlier, later chapters will extend the ways that social media is insinuating itself into crisis communication throughout the entire crisis management process.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: SENSE MAKING

Crisis leaders engage in sense making when they find and interpret warning signs for a crisis. "Seeing" crisis warning signs is always easy after the crisis occurs. The real skill is noticing warning signs before the crisis occurs. Crisis leaders are able to locate warning signs, understand what they mean, and decide what they should do to reduce the likelihood of a crisis occurring (James & Wooten, 2010). Sense making is an underlying theme in Chapter 2. Social media are invaluable sources of crisis warning signs for modern organizations. Paracrises are essentially warning signs. Chapter 3 will return the topic of identifying potential crisis warning signs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to understand that online and social media really consists of multiple channels and not one communication channel?
2. Which do you find more appealing and why, the small-seed or large-seed approach?
3. What do you think makes word of mouth so powerful?
4. What are the dangers associated with using any social media?
5. What if any value is there in differentiating between crises and paracrises?
6. Besides the cases listed in this chapter, what other evidence can you find that social media is affecting crisis communication?
7. Which social media do you use? Do you think organizations could use it to reach you during a crisis? Why or why not?

8. Does it make sense to differentiate between traditional and social media crises? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 3

Proactive Management Functions and Crisis Management

The best way to manage a crisis is to prevent one. If the crisis does not occur, no stakeholders are harmed and the organization suffers no damage. Generally, people think of crisis management as reactive because they focus on what an organization does in response to a crisis, which is the topic of Chapter 8. However, clever crisis managers are proactive as well by seeking crisis warning signs and taking measures designed to reduce or eliminate the possibility of the warning sign evolving into a crisis. In fact, crisis managers must develop a system designed to scan and monitor for crisis warning signals—what I term the *crisis-sensing mechanism*—and to act on those signals when necessary.

Crisis management should draw upon existing resources in organizations to prevent wasted time, effort, and money. Crisis prevention is facilitated by tapping into the three management functions that actively scan the environment for threats: issues management, reputation management, and risk management. This chapter integrates these three proactive functions into crisis management to develop the concept of crisis prevention. Each of the three functions will be defined and their relationships to crisis management explored, followed by a discussion of why the functions are so strongly interrelated.

THE PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

Crisis prevention seeks crisis warning signs with the hopes of reducing the likelihood of a crisis developing. The search for warning signs is known as signal detection. Signal detection begins with scanning, a systematic search for and analysis of events. Crisis managers scan both outside of the organization (the environment) and inside of the organization for crisis warning signs. Neglecting either area could result in overlooking important warning signs of an impending crisis. As part of this process, crisis managers must evaluate the information they have collected for warning signs. Those warning signs with the greatest potential for signaling danger are then monitored for further developments. Scanning is a form of radar; it identifies as many warning signs as possible. Monitoring is a form of focused tracking; it keeps a close watch on the warning signs that have the greatest potential to become crises. Therefore, the signal detection stage must include collecting and analyzing information that may contain warning signs.

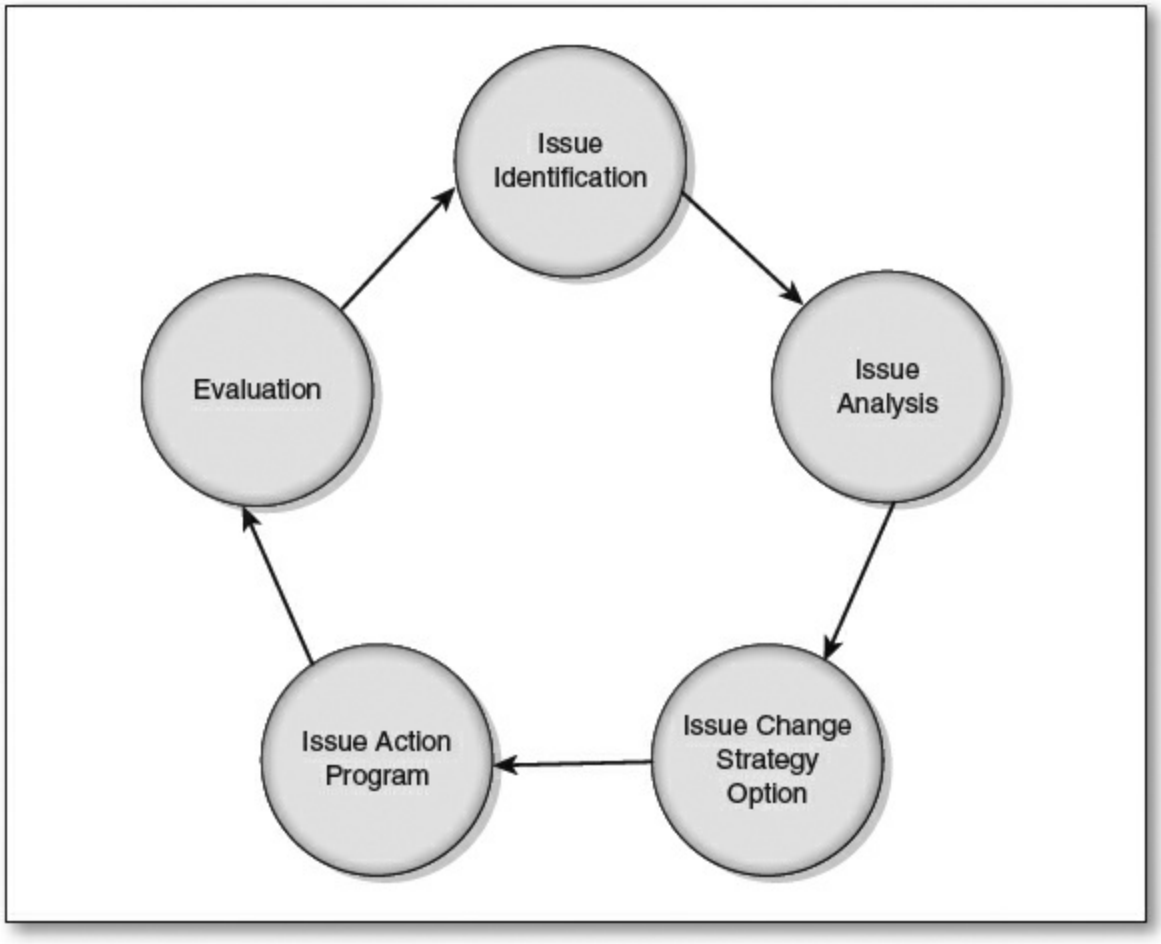
Issues Management

An issue is "a trend or condition . . . that, if continued, would have a significant effect on how a company is operated" (Moore, 1979, p. 43). In essence, an issue is a type of problem whose resolution can impact the organization. Issues management includes the identification of issues and actions taken to affect them (Heath, 1990). It tries to lessen the negative impact of an issue and is a systematic approach intended to shape how an issue develops and is resolved. Issues management is a proactive attempt to have an issue decided in a way that is favorable to an organization. While issues management can address internal concerns (Dutton & Jackson, 1987; Dutton & Ottensmeyer, 1987), the emphasis is on societal and political issues that populate the organization's environment—external issues (Heath, 2005).

Managing an issue involves attempts to shape how the issue is resolved. The idea is to have the issue resolved in a manner that avoids a crisis. For instance, say that legislation is proposed that would threaten the financial viability of the railroad by making trucking companies more competitive with rail transportation. The issues management effort prevents a crisis by persuading Congress to reject the legislative proposal. Communication is used to influence an issue's resolution.

The Jones and Chase (1979) model (issue identification, analysis, change strategy option, action program, and evaluation) is the classic model familiar to most people involved in issues management. The action step centers on communicating the organization's position on the issue to stakeholders involved with the issue. Goals and objectives for the communication program are developed, followed by the selection of the means and resources needed to achieve them. Decisions are made about the specific messages to be communicated, when to communicate them, and the channels of communication to be used (Jones & Chase, 1979). The exact mix of communication strategies depends on the stakeholders involved in the issues management effort and the current stage of the issue's progression (Crable & Vibbert, 1985). Developing the previous transportation example can clarify the issue action program. The railroad company decides the goal is to prevent passage of the pro-trucking legislative proposal. Legislators, the media, and voters are the stakeholders to be targeted. The message centers on the danger to automobile drivers created by the pro-trucking legislation, and the message must be sent immediately because a vote will be held in a few months. Advertisements, publicity, and lobbying are the communication channels used. The focus in this example is on how organizations use issues management to shape their environments. Figure 3.1 is visual depiction of the Jones and Chase model.

Figure 3.1 Jones and Chase Issues Management Model



Issues management can also involve changing the organization. Issue managers may decide that the best way to resolve an issue would be to correct or improve operating standards and plans. McDonald's illustrated this point when it abandoned the polystyrene "clamshell" burger boxes. Environmentalists had been complaining about the environmentally unfriendly clamshell packaging for years. The company's original plan was to win acceptance of the clamshell by emphasizing recycling. By recycling, McDonald's would eliminate the complaint that its packaging would clog landfills for hundreds of years. McDonald's was trying to change stakeholder attitudes. However, consumers did not respond well to the early recycling tests, so McDonald's abandoned the clamshell recycling campaign and simply ended use of that packaging (A. Snyder, 1991). McDonald's changed its procedures rather than trying to change its stakeholders' opinions.

As Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt (1996) note, some issues can develop into crises, making issues management relevant to crisis scanning. Issues management can be a form of crisis prevention when the issues management effort prevents an issue from developing its crisis potential (Grunig & Repper, 1992). An example of this is pharmaceutical companies' use of direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising. You have no doubt seen many DTC messages. Have you seen television advertisements for drugs to address cholesterol, high blood pressure, social anxiety, acid reflux, or sexual dysfunction? Then you have been exposed to DTC. The United States and New Zealand are the only developed countries to allow DTC

efforts.

In 2005, the U.S. Senate and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began deliberating on the need to regulate DTC. To prevent government regulation, the pharmaceutical industry decided to self-regulate. In August 2005, PhRMA, the industry association for major pharmaceutical manufacturers, announced a new 15-point Guiding Principles document for DTC (which was updated in 2008). Most of the principles repeated existing FDA regulations, such as that DTC information should be accurate and not misleading. New measures included educating physicians prior to a DTC campaign and allowing no DTC messages in media targeted to age-inappropriate audiences (PhRMA, 2008). Most of the major pharmaceutical companies publicly endorsed the plan. Talk about regulating DTC all but disappeared. PhRMA used the complete spectrum of issues management communication tools: advocacy advertising, direct lobbying, grassroots lobbying, letter writing, e-mail, web pages, and publicity.

A crisis or ineffective crisis management can spawn an issue, creating the need for issues management. When three students were killed in the 2000 Seton Hall dormitory fire, new legislation was passed in New Jersey requiring all dormitories to have sprinkler systems. Ineffective management of the Exxon Valdez crisis helped to block oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for decades. The laxative market offers an example of how issues management can both avert and create a crisis. Until the 1990s, the main ingredient in the two leading laxatives, Correctol and ex-lax, was phenolphthalein. In the early 1990s, the FDA began investigating a link between phenolphthalein and cancer. In 1995, the preliminary study with rats indicated that phenolphthalein could be a carcinogen. The FDA now thought about banning phenolphthalein. Novartis, the manufacturer of ex-lax, did not see a problem and defended the use of phenolphthalein. Schering-Plough, the maker of Correctol, decided to switch from phenolphthalein to bisacodyl and supported the FDA move to ban phenolphthalein.

Additional evidence was collected by the FDA that supported the phenolphthalein-cancer link. In April 1997, the FDA went public with its cancer concern over phenolphthalein. Schering-Plough supported the decision and informed customers that it had removed phenolphthalein from Correctol over a year earlier, while ex-lax still used it. Novartis kept fighting the phenolphthalein ban issue. The company advocated a public education campaign to curb laxative abuse. The idea was that proper, limited use would not place people at risk, that only those who abuse laxatives were at risk for cancer. In August 1997, the FDA proposed a ban on phenolphthalein. At that time, Novartis recalled ex-lax and introduced a new formula shortly thereafter. However, Correctol had already established its competitive advantage by demonstrating greater concern for customers because Schering-Plough had acted much faster to protect customers from the phenolphthalein threat (McGinley, 1997).

Reputation Management

A reputation is an evaluation stakeholders make about an organization. Hence, we can talk about favorable and unfavorable reputations. Stakeholders are any group that can affect or be affected by the behavior of an organization (Bryson, 2004), a point that will be developed in more detail shortly. As noted in Chapter 1, reputations are widely recognized as a valuable if intangible asset.

Reputation management involves efforts designed to influence stakeholder evaluations of an organization. Reputations are formed as stakeholders evaluate organizations based on direct and indirect interactions. Direct interactions form the basics of the organization-stakeholder relationship (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004). Positive interactions build favorable reputations, while unpleasant interactions lead to unfavorable ones. Favorable stakeholder relationships can be taken as a marker of a positive reputation. The relationship history—how the organization has treated stakeholders in the past—is a function of an organization meeting or failing to meet stakeholder expectations (Finet, 1994). Organizations build favorable relationship histories that create positive reputations by meeting and exceeding stakeholder expectations (Coombs, 2004a).

Indirect interactions are mediated reports of how the organization treats its stakeholders. News reports, comments from friends or family, online comments, and messages sent by an organization are important sources of information for evaluating organizations. Do you dislike Enron? Did you meet anyone from Enron, buy Enron stock, or purchase products from Enron? The odds are that you built your opinion of Enron based on media reports. In fact, stakeholders are more likely to draw on indirect than direct experiences when crafting their personal views of an organization's reputation (Carroll & McCombs, 2003; Stephenson, & Blackshaw, 2006). Being evaluative, reputations are based in large part on how stakeholders assess an organization's ability to meet their expectations. How well an organization does this is a rough guide for determining whether a reputation will be positive or negative. In some respects, a reputation is a reflection of the organization-stakeholder relationship. A threat to the relationship is a threat to the reputation. It is important to dig deeper into the relationship to appreciate its connection to reputations.

But what does the term *relationship* mean? Talking about organizational relationships with stakeholders assumes that we all understand and agree on what is meant by *relationship* and *stakeholder*. For crisis management, a useful definition of relationship is the interdependence of two or more people or groups. This definition is a modification of one developed by O'Hair, Friedrich, Wiemann, and Wiemann (1995) and centers on interdependence, some factor that binds the two people or groups together. The interdependence definition of relationship is useful because it is consistent with the stakeholder theory that guides most business thinking (Rowley, 1997).

Stakeholder theory posits that an organization's environment is populated with various stakeholders. An organization survives or thrives by effectively managing these stakeholders

(Bryson, 2004; Clarkson, 1991; Wood, 1991). Stakeholders are generally defined as any persons or groups that have an interest, right, claim, or ownership in an organization. Stakeholders are separated into two distinct groups: primary and secondary. Primary stakeholders are those people or groups whose actions can be harmful or beneficial to an organization. Failure to maintain a continuing interaction with a primary stakeholder could result in the failure of the organization. Typical primary stakeholders include employees, investors, customers, suppliers, and the government. For instance, organizations cannot operate without employees, and government officials may close a facility for a variety of legal or regulatory reasons. Secondary stakeholders or influencers are those people or groups who can affect or be affected by the actions of an organization. Typical influencers include the media, activist groups, and competitors. Influencers cannot stop an organization from functioning, but they can damage it (Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

Primary and secondary stakeholders are interdependent with an organization, thus the relevance of the earlier definition of *relationship*. Each of the stakeholders has a connection with the organization that links them in some way. The links include economic, social, and political concerns. Reputation management is the management of the relationships between the organization and its various stakeholders, and organizational success is predicated on maintaining an effective balance in these relationships (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Rowley, 1997; Savage, Nix, Whitehead, & Blair, 1991). It follows that stakeholders can play an important role in crisis management.

Primary stakeholders can stop organizational operations and trigger a crisis. Conflict with an organization can lead primary stakeholders to withhold their contributions. As a result, an organization may stop operating if those contributions cannot be replaced. For instance, unhappy workers can strike, and discontented customers can boycott. In 1997, the Teamsters' 15-day strike against UPS cost the company $600 million in revenues. A total of 185,000 Teamsters, nearly two-thirds of the UPS American workforce, joined the strike. At best, UPS was able to operate at only 10% capacity, using management personnel and drivers who did not strike. UPS found it could not function without the drivers, so it conceded to their demands (Sewell, 1997).

In 2004, Kryptonite announced it would recall some of its popular and high-priced bicycle locks. The problem was that many locks could be picked using just the outside casing of a Bic pen. The impetus for the recall was a complaint from a group of angry bikers taking their case to the Internet via discussion group postings and blogs. Some people even posted videos showing how to pick the lock, to prove the claim was true. The bikers were angry that their very expensive bikes were being stolen or were at risk from the faulty locks. It took Kryptonite a week to respond to customer concerns, a long time in the Internet world (Wagstaff, 2006). Primary stakeholders are powerful because it is difficult and often impossible to replace the contributions they provide to the organization (R. K. Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997).

For crisis management, it would be a mistake to focus solely on primary stakeholders.

Problems in relationships with secondary stakeholders can also harm reputations and trigger crises. The media can expose organizational misdeeds or generate other negative publicity, competitors can instigate lawsuits that bind an organization's operations, and activists can launch boycotts or protests against an organization. A few examples illustrate the role of secondary stakeholders in creating crises.

In February 2006, Airborne was brought down to earth by a *Good Morning America* (GMA) special report. On its packaging, Airborne claimed to fight colds. In fact, it claimed to be a miracle cold buster that could cure colds in an hour. The GMA investigation reported that the product was no more effective than hand washing during cold and flu season—it was not a cure. The key finding was that the clinical study Airborne used to support its claim was highly questionable. GMA found that the research firm was created just to study Airborne and that the main researcher had false credentials. Airborne promised to remove any mention of the study from its website and promotional materials (*Does Airborne Really Stave Off Colds?*, 2006). The company had to publicly address the concerns about its claims and documentation. A media story had precipitated a crisis.

Also in February 2006, Procter & Gamble (P&G) filed a lawsuit against Vi-Jon Laboratories, a manufacturer of health and beauty products. P&G alleged that Vi-Jon had infringed and diluted the unique trade dress of its Crest Pro-Health Rinse, saying that the Vi-Jon packing looked too much like Crest's and consumers could be confused and buy the wrong product. P&G also alleged that Vi-Jon's advertising for its Vi-Jon Rinse was false and misleading (*Procter & Gamble Files Lawsuit,* 2006). In April 2006, a settlement was reached between P&G and Vi-Jon. Vi-Jon agreed to remove its product from the market, to stop using a bottle design similar to Crest Pro-Health Rinse, and to stop making gingivitis efficacy claims in its advertising (*P&G Reaches Settlement Agreement*, 2006).

In both cases, a secondary stakeholder had influenced organizational actions. Secondary, as well as primary, stakeholders can create a crisis for an organization. Mismanaging the organization-stakeholder relations can damage an organization's reputation and evolve into a crisis (Grunig, 1992; Heath, 1988). Therefore, watching organization-stakeholder relationships contributes to crisis scanning as a part of reputation management. Early problems related to reputations are signs that a crisis could erupt.

The broadening array of stakeholders that are important to organizations has promoted the integration of corporate social responsibility (CSR) into the conceptualization and management of reputations. CSR can be defined as "the management of actions designed to affect an organization's impacts on society" (Coombs & Holladay, 2010, p. 262). The societal impacts of CSR are quite diverse, including worker rights, sustainability, human rights, and eradication of disease. Traditionally, financial factors have dominated corporate reputation management. The financial factors became the criteria used to evaluate corporate reputations. The dominant reputation measures, such as *Fortune* magazine's Most Admired list and the Reputation Institute's RepTrak (originally the Reputation Quotient), reflect a financial orientation. Social responsibility has been a more minor

element within these measures. For instance, the RepTrak has seven dimensions: leadership, performance, products and services, innovation, citizenship, workplace, and governance. CSR is a part of citizenship (e.g., contributes to society), workplace (e.g., cares about employee well-being), and governance (e.g., responsible use of power) dimensions. The Most Admired list has eight dimensions, with only one—community and environmental responsibility—relevant to CSR.

CSR increasingly is playing a more important role in reputation discussions. Charles Fombrun (2005), a leader in reputation management thinking, now refers to CSR as an integral aspect of reputation. CSR is quickly becoming a key driver and integral part of reputation management. Reputations are evaluations and can range from favorable to unfavorable. Both CSR and reputation are dependent upon stakeholder expectations. In fact, the current thinking in CSR is that stakeholder expectations are the foundation for the process. Stakeholders define CSR by determining what social concerns are appropriate for CSR efforts (e.g., Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Reputation managers can no longer concentrate exclusively on investors and their financial interests. CSR now is part of the key evaluation criteria for reputations.

As noted earlier in this book, crises have a negative effect on reputations. Reputations also have an effect on crisis management. A negative reputation prior to a crisis makes the crisis more difficult to manage. A prior negative reputation, for instance, increases stakeholder perceptions that the organization is responsible for the crisis and increases reputation damage (Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2006). A positive reputation prior to a crisis acts as a resource that can make crisis management easier. Crisis experts agree that favorable organization-stakeholder relationships are a benefit during crisis management (e.g., Ulmer, 2001). As Alsop (2004) states, organizations "build up 'reputation capital' to tide them over in turbulent times. It's like opening a savings account for a rainy day. If a crisis strikes . . . reputation suffers less and rebounds more quickly" (p. 17). A crisis will inflict some reputation damage. "A crisis or other negative development will certainly tax any reputation and rob a company of some of its stored-up reputation capital" (Alsop, 2004, p. 17).

Risk Management

Risk management represents attempts to reduce the vulnerabilities faced by an organization (Smallwood, 1995). Vulnerabilities are weaknesses that could develop into crises. Basically, vulnerabilities are risks. Like crises, not all risks can be avoided or completely eliminated. Hence, risk management involves a number of strategies that vary in their crisis-prevention potential. The base for risk management is risk assessment.

Risk assessment attempts to identify risk factors or weaknesses and to assess the probability that a weakness will be exploited or developed into a crisis (Levitt, 1997; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Every organization faces a variety of risk factors. Typically,

they include personnel, products, the production process, facilities, competition, regulations, and customers (Barton, 2001). Risk factors exist as a normal part of an organization's operation. The following incidents illustrate their crisis potential. Very late on an August night in 2012, recent hire Terence S. Tyler entered the Pathmark grocery store in Old Bridge, New Jersey. He then began firing an AK-47 assault rifle, killing two coworkers, 18-year-old Christine Lo Brutto and 24-year-old Bryan Breen, before killing himself—personnel risk (NBC News, 2012). In January 2009, an explosion ripped through the Silver Eagle oil refinery near Salt Lake City, Utah. The blast sent four workers to the hospital with burns and caused the evacuation of local homes—production process risk. In January 2010, Johnson & Johnson expanded a recall of over-the-counter drugs due to a moldy smell. About 70 customers were made nauseous by the smell. The recall included regular and extra-strength Tylenol, children's Tylenol, 8-hour Tylenol, Tylenol arthritis, Tylenol PM, children's Motrin, Motrin IB, Benadryl Rolaids, Simply Sleep, and St. Joseph's aspirin—product and customer risk.

Risk assessment has more of an internal rather than external focus. The internal weaknesses identified through risk assessment provide vital information for crisis management scanning. For instance, Occupational Safety and Health Administration records might reveal a pattern of mishandling acids. The crisis team concerned would look for ways to break the pattern, thereby preventing injuries and reducing a crisis-inducing risk factor.

Once a risk is identified, decisions are made about risk aversion, the elimination or reduction of a risk. Two factors drive the use of risk-aversion decisions. The first factor is cost. Risk managers use procedures such as risk balancing to compare the costs of the risk (e.g., costs of deaths, injuries, litigation, and property damage) to the costs of risks reduction (e.g., equipment and actual work needed to prevent or reduce the risk). Organizations may take no action when the costs of risk reduction outweigh the costs estimated from the risk. However, ignoring risk can be a more costly move than anticipated. If stakeholders discover their safety was sacrificed for profit, a different and much worse type of crisis erupts. In May 2010, documents were released that shed new light on BP's deadly 2005 Texas City refinery explosion. Lawyer Brent Coon released a two-page BP document that showed the company favored profit over human safety and lives. The memo was a cost-benefit analysis of trailers to be used at Texas City. Most of the 15 fatalities from the explosion were workers in these trailers. The memo showed a value of $10 million for a human life in the calculation to determine which type of trailer to buy. BP concluded that blast-resistant trailers were too expensive, costing 10 times more than the less protective trailers BP did buy for Texas City. The most disturbing aspect of the memo was that it used the analogy of the three little pigs, with the pigs being the workers and an accident being the big bad wolf. The final conclusion from the memo was that human life had a price and BP was not willing to overpay to protect workers—finance trumped human safety (Outzen, 2010).

When managers choose to engage in risk aversion, risk management becomes crisis prevention. Actions are taken to completely eliminate the risk or to reduce it to as low a level as reasonably possible (Levitt, 1997). The use of dangerous chemicals in a manufacturing process illustrates this point. Using inherently safer practices is an approach to designing safer chemical plants, storage facilities, and chemical processes. Three common risk-reduction strategies resulting in inherently safer practices are to (1) reduce the amount of hazardous material on site, (2) substitute a less hazardous substance, and (3) use a less hazardous process or storage condition. If less hazardous materials are on site, the effect of a crisis is reduced: The Chevron Richmond Refinery reduced the amount of anhydrous ammonia it stored on site and moved the storage facilities farther from the nearby residential area. If a nontoxic or less hazardous chemical can be substituted for a hazardous chemical, a risk can be eliminated or reduced: The Mt. View Sanitary District, a wastewater treatment facility, replaced three hazardous chemicals (chlorine, sulfur dioxide, and ammonia) with an ultraviolet light system to disinfect wastewater. Changes in the chemical process used or the state in which a chemical is stored can reduce a hazard: Acrylate producers have switched from manufacturing with the Reppe process to the safer propylene oxidation process, and Dow Chemical switched from using liquid chlorine to the less hazardous gaseous form.

Using inherently safer practices is one among a variety of approaches for eliminating or reducing risk. Another common effort is training, and topics related to risk aversion can range from chemical safety to e-mail use. The exact action taken by an organization to reduce a risk varies according to the actual risk (Lerbinger, 1997). For instance, many companies face computer rather than chemical risks. Antivirus software, firewalls, and employee Internet use policies are ways to prevent risks. Consider the threat of viruses, such as the one known as Melissa, that could damage an organization's computer systems and databases. Cognos Corporation, a software developer, knew that the Melissa virus contained a file that was over 25K in size. The company set a 25K limit on incoming messages to keep Melissa out. Managers acted quickly; within 1 hour of identifying the risk, a policy was created and relayed to employees along with a rationale for the new policy (Meserve, 1999). The basic process involves determining whether the risk aversion is possible and then implementing the risk aversion program.

When a risk becomes manifest, a crisis can occur. Failure to reduce the risks associated with the startup of the isomerization unit at Texas City manifested itself in an explosion that killed 15 workers and injured over 170 others at the BP facility. Crises often create new risks. The oil from the Deepwater Horizon oil platform explosion in 2010 triggered multiple crises for those in the tourism and fishing industries in the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. Moreover, crisis communication may require the discussion of risk and the need to engage in risk communication, "a communication infrastructure, transactional communication process among individuals and organizations regarding the character, cause, degree, significance, uncertainty, control, and overall perception of risk" (Palenchar, 2005, p. 752). Risk communication is essentially a dialogue between the organization

creating the risk and the stakeholders who are asked to bear the risk. Organizations explain what the risks are and what can be done to protect people from the risk, while stakeholders explain their concerns about and perceptions of the risk.

Thus far we have discussed traditional risks such as those related to personnel and safety. These are easy to quantify and have close connections with insurance. Modern organizations face a wider array of risks when CSR and social media are added to the mix. The earlier discussion linked CSR to reputation. Increasingly, CSR is becoming a risk because of its importance to reputation. If an organization is shown to be irresponsible (an example would be a challenge as discussed in Chapter 2), the reputation is damaged. Hence, CSR becomes a risk for the organization. For instance, organizations manage CSR risk by auditing their suppliers to determine whether the suppliers are meeting the organization's code of conduct social and environmental issues. While organizations turn to social media to build relations with other stakeholders, these channels are risks as well. As noted in Chapter 2, stakeholders can hijack social media (control the content of the messages) and damage an organization's reputation. The utilization of social media channels is a risk that must be managed. CSR and social media risks illustrate how closely the proactive management functions are interconnected with one another.

Issues management, reputation management, and risk management all can contribute to crisis scanning. Combined, the three functions provide a broad radar system for detecting warning signs. The challenge for crisis managers is to integrate the three organizational functions into an effective crisis-sensing mechanism, which is the focus of Chapter 4.

INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

The expansion of issues management from influencing public policy decisions to include influencing organizational behavior directly (e.g., Botan & Taylor, 2004; Grunig & Repper, 1992; Heath, 2005; Jaques, 2006) helps to illustrate the tight connections between the proactive management functions. With increasing frequency, stakeholders are taking their demands for organizational reforms directly to organizations instead of trying to establish new governmental requirements for dictating organizational behavior. Organizations have been amenable to the shift because self-regulation is preferable to government regulation. Self-regulation costs less and allows organizations greater control over the details of the regulation (Coombs & Holladay, 2011). Political scientists refer to the shift from public policy directly to organizations' behaviors as private politics.

It has been argued that activist stakeholders have consciously shifted from the governmental to the private arena to achieve their goals (Diermeier, 2007). *Private politics* is a confusing term, so we will call it *organizational issues management*. Communication is central to organizational issues management because communication is used to generate the power necessary to encourage an organization to change its behavior. Organizational issues

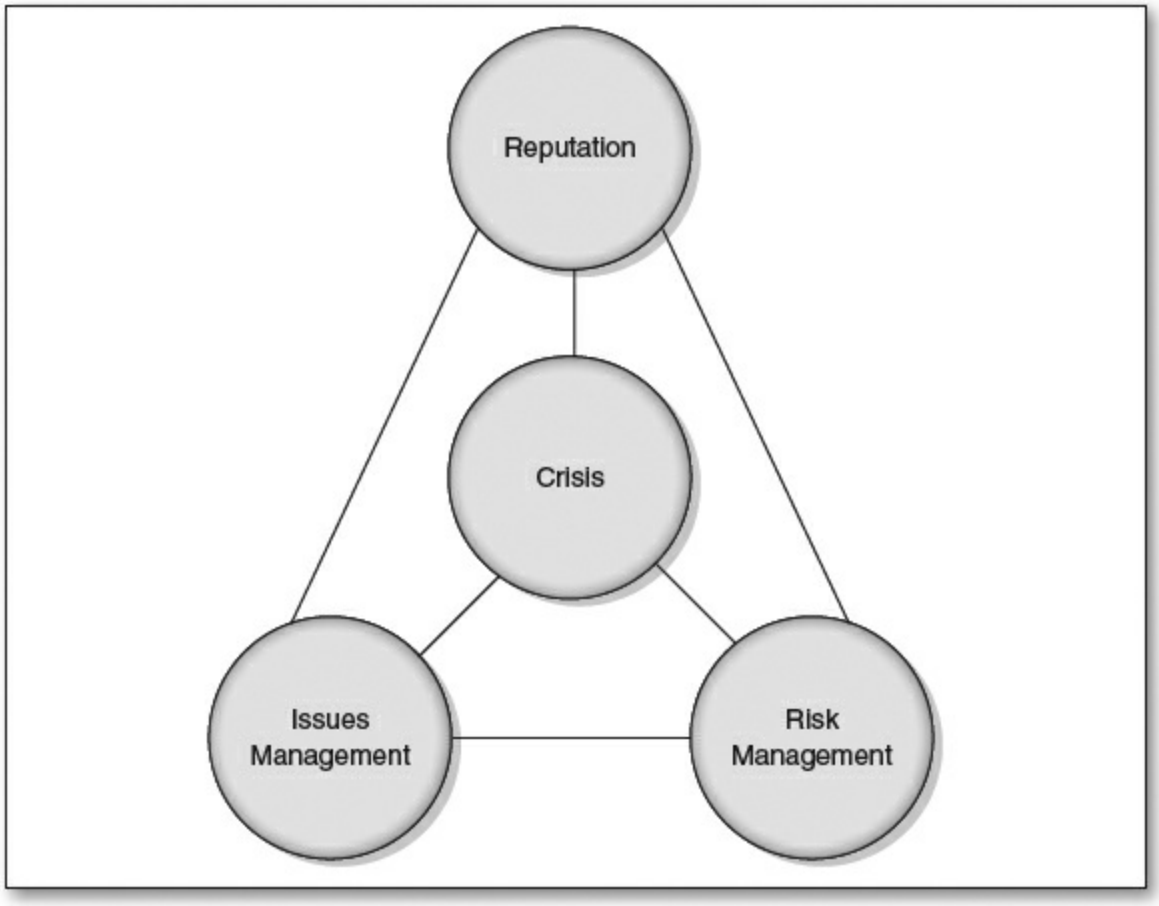
management hinges on stakeholders being able to find a leverage point where they can successfully exert pressure on an organization. Reputation has become the primary leverage point for stakeholders. Threats to reputation create a source of power for activist stakeholders and a source of risk for organizations. When stakeholders generate negative comments about organizations in traditional/legacy media and digital media, managers worry about the reputational damage the negative comments will inflict on the organization (Conway, Ward, Lewis, & Bernhardt, 2007; Coombs, 2002). If organizations do not change their behaviors, activist stakeholders will use public relations tools to transform the threat into an actual crisis.

Public relations researchers have noted the potential of communication to generate power for activist stakeholders intending to change organizational behaviors. Moreover, this power from public relations actions is enhanced by the Internet (Coombs, 1998; Coombs & Holladay, 2012b; Heath, 1998). Traditional and digital public relations efforts can be used to create negative comments. Hence, if a reputational threat can be eliminated by modifying a problematic behavior, management will change the behavior. The effects of organizational issues management on an organization can be as simple as a public commitment to a course of action or as complex as the development of specific self-regulatory guidelines monitoring by independent third parties (D. P. Baron, 2003). Organizational issues management involves reputations becoming risks and the need to manage issues, reputations, and risks in order to avoid a crisis.

As the discussion of organizational issues management illustrates, it is rather artificial to talk separately about the connections between crisis management and issues management, crisis management and risk management, and crisis management and reputation management. In reality these four proactive management functions are tightly interconnected, which is illustrated in Figure 3.2. A tetrahedron is a geometric figure composed of four triangles that have three triangles meet at each vertex or connecting point. A simpler way to describe a tetrahedron is as a three-sided pyramid. Each of the four connecting points on the PMT represents one of the four proactive management functions. Changes in any one of the four functions can affect the others.

Reputation is the broadest concept because it involves any information a stakeholder receives about an organization. It follows that efforts to manage crises, risks, and issues can affect a reputation. We have already discussed how crisis harms reputations, but the same can be true for risks and issues. For instance, a reputation may deteriorate if an organization exposes stakeholders to unwanted risk or supports the resolution of an issue that stakeholders oppose. In turn, those risks and issues can then become crises.

Figure 3.2 Proactive Management Tetrahedron



Risks can become issues as people seek governmental help to control the risk. Consider the earlier laxative example. The ingredient was a risk, people wanted the government to take action on the risk (issues management), and the EPA banned the ingredient/risk, sparking a crisis and affecting reputations. Because of the strong connections, it is important that crisis managers have a familiarity with issues management, risk management, and reputation management. The value of these proactive management functions extends well beyond crisis prevention to the other stages of crisis management.

CONCLUSION

Crisis management works best when it includes avoiding or preventing crises. Issues management, risk management or aversion, and reputation management all can be used to avoid crises or at least their most dire consequences. Some issues can evolve into crises; issues management can be used to prevent such crises. Risks have the potential of becoming crises; risk aversion is used to lessen the chance. A threat to a reputation can be identified and resolved; by understanding and working with one another, the organization and its stakeholders can resolve reputation-related problems early on, before they escalate into crises. For example, customer complaints can be corrected before customers become outraged and publicly protest about a product or service.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: CREATIVITY

Crisis leaders need creativity because crises create new and unique situations. No two crises are exactly alike. That requires leaders to deal with novel events during a crisis. One aspect of creativity is the ability to create new and useful ideas (James & Wooten, 2010). By combining ideas from issues management, risk management, reputation management, and crisis management, leaders can create unique ideas that can be useful during a crisis. All knowledge from all four areas can be useful during a crisis. Another aspect of creativity that is essential in crises is the ability to project the path of a crisis warning sign. Issues management, risk management, and reputation management provide different ways to visualize the potential path of a crisis warning sign. Combining the proactive management functions should provide new insights into the projected trajectory of crisis warning signs. The idea of projecting the effect of crisis warning signs is discussed further in Chapter 4.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. While this chapter separates issues, risk, and reputation management, the three areas are interrelated. How can a risk become an issue, an issue become a risk, a risk threaten reputation, or an issue threaten reputation? How do you see these three functions being interrelated?
2. How do you think perception gaps form? Does this inform how you would correct a perception gap?
3. What does it mean to say a risk can develop into a crisis?
4. Is it accurate to say that reputation management is the larger concept because of how the other functions can impact it?
5. Would you argue for an organization to create a separate department to manage these functions? Why or why not?
6. What new challenges does private politics create for crisis managers?

CHAPTER 4

The Crisis Prevention Process

Crisis prevention is proactive crisis management. The goal of crisis prevention is to avoid a crisis. Another term for prevention is *mitigation*. Mitigation means to lessen the effect of something. Many crises cannot be prevented; crisis managers can hope only to mitigate the occurrence or the effects of a crisis. Prevention itself can mean a hindrance in addition to keeping something from occurring. In this chapter, the term *prevention* is used to capture both stopping something from happening and hindering something from happening. Crisis managers take actions designed to eliminate a crisis threat or to reduce the likelihood of the threat manifesting into a crisis. Issues management, risk management, and reputation management all provide ideas for developing crisis prevention. Drawing from these areas, this chapter provides details as to what composes crisis prevention.

The crisis prevention process is a combination of signal detection and correction. Signal detection attempts to find crisis warning signs, while correction is designed to reduce or eliminate the threat. Combined, the two form the five-step crisis prevention process: (1) identify the sources to scan, (2) collect the information, (3) analyze the information, (4) take preventative action if warranted, and (5) evaluate the effectiveness of the threat reduction. The first three steps involve signal detection, and the last two involve correction. Elements of the three proactive management functions can be combined to create a comprehensive crisis prevention program. The structure of this chapter follows the five-step crisis prevention process.

IDENTIFY THE SOURCES TO SCAN

Issues and reputation management emphasize external threats, while risk management has more of an internal focus. Their different foci are reflected in the typical sources that each function scans for threats. Sources used in issues management, risk management, and reputation management can be combined to provide a comprehensive set of sources that crisis managers should scan.

Environmental scanning is a tool that is popular in issues management (Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1996; Heath, 1997; Heath & Nelson, 1986; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Basically, environmental scanning means watching the environment for changes, trends, events, and emerging social, political, or health issues. The information is used to guide organizational decision making to plot future actions (Lauzen, 1995). Unfortunately,

environmental scanning strategies used by organizations are not well developed. Still, crisis managers must consider the sources involved in external scanning that would be helpful in locating warning signs.

Red flag is a common term for a sign of danger that has been used in previous crisis management writings (James & Wooten, 2010). The use of red flags as a warning sign of danger dates back to the 1700s (Thickeness, 2006). While scanning is a general process, crisis managers should also look for known warning signs of crises, what can be called red flags. Red flags would aid the crisis prevention process by specifying what to look for, where to look for it (source), and what it means (analysis). Crisis managers should develop and update accordingly their list of red flags.

External scanning uses both traditional print and online sources. In fact, most traditional sources can now be found online as well. A common method used to monitor the environment is to watch, listen to, or read both traditional and online news sources (Coombs, 2002; Heath, 1988). The news media include leading or elite newspapers (e.g., *New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post*), news and business magazines (e.g., *Time, Newsweek, Fortune*), and television news programs, such as the evening news and TV news magazines (e.g., *60 Minutes*, *20/20*). Of special interest is information about crises in similar organizations. Case studies of similar organizations in crisis are a valuable resource for crisis managers, allowing crisis teams to learn from someone else's crisis rather than their own (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992).

Other useful publications include trade journals, relevant medical or scientific journals and websites, newsletters, and public opinion surveys. The trade outlets are likely to carry stories about crises suffered by similar organizations. The trade journals, other publications, and websites provide information about issues the industry is facing as well as industry-specific complaints. All can help to identify possible crises for individual organizations within that industry. Medical or scientific journals and websites may contain studies that could affect how people view an industry. The dangers of cholesterol and concerns over the link between cell phone use and automobile accidents are examples of pertinent study topics. The public's first exposure to these two health concerns was through medical and scientific publications, not the news media.

Newsletters include reports published by special interest groups, foundations, and government agencies. Each can indicate potential threats to an organization. Special interest publications inform organizations about the concerns of activist stakeholders and indicate if anger is being focused on their industry or their specific organization. Foundations can identify emerging issues. Government publications and online portals offer insights into possible regulatory or legal changes and identify emerging issues. For example, the *Federal Register* has information about potential regulatory changes, the *Congressional Record* and *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* provide information about new legislation, and the *Congressional Quarterly Researcher* provides information about salient issues in U.S. society. Public opinion surveys can indicate changes in attitudes, lifestyles, and values (Heath,

1997).

Individuals are another source of environmental information. Crisis managers should focus on two broad categories: public opinion experts and the organization's own stakeholders. Public opinion experts, like the published data, provide insights into public attitudes, lifestyles, and values. Stakeholders can tell the organization how they feel about issues and organizational actions (Heath & Nelson, 1986). It is easy to become overly dependent on the mass media and forget about people as resources for environmental information. There is more about people on the Internet as a source of information in the reputation management section.

Information spreads on the Internet by ways other than in the conventional media or publication sources. Discussion groups, message boards and forums, web pages, dedicated complaint sites, blogs, microblogs, content-sharing sites, aggregators, and social bookmarking and social networking sites are information sources that should not be overlooked. As noted in Chapter 2, online communication vehicles can be divided into traditional websites and social media. Social media has drawn the most interest recently because of its ability to spread information quickly.

Social media is easy to use, and I would bet you have already created some social media yourself. Social media is simply the ability to post content (e.g., messages, videos, images) to the Internet that other people can access. Since the Internet was created, people who venture online often become content creators. An early term for how people created content online was *user-generated content* (UGC). The early discussions boards that still exist today are early examples of UGC. Today, the term *social media* is used instead of UGC. Social media includes a variety of Internet-based applications (channels) that allow user to easily create and post content to the Internet. Another term used to capture user-created content is *stakeholder media* (Hunter, Menestrel, & De Bettignies, 2008).

All a person needs is Internet access and the ability to use a keyboard. Admittedly, most social media is of little interest to anyone. However, it is a potentially powerful form of word-of-mouth information distribution (Laczniak, DeCarlo, & Ramaswami, 2001). Word of mouth is recognized as serious force that can shape consumer decisions; hence, it should not be ignored (Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2004). Consider how concerned organizational leadership can be with attack sites—websites designed to criticize an organization (Holtz, 1999). As noted in Chapter 3, tuning in to social media can be a very effective way to listen to stakeholders. Again, most social media is irrelevant to an organization, so crisis managers must carefully identify the social media most relevant to their concerns or hire a consulting firm to monitor for them. There is a growing legion of companies that can help organizations monitor social media for warning signs. Among the more prominent social media monitoring companies in 2013 are Collective Intellect, Sysomos, Attensity, Crimson Hexagon, and Sprial16. Sysomos (2005–2013), for example, has a product called Heartbeat that provides features such as real-time social media monitoring and automated sentiment analysis. Organizations may choose to develop their own social media monitoring system

using software such as Unilyzer, Google Alerts, or Trendspottr. Refer back to Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of the categories of social media to consider.

Consider the power of social media in this example. As of this writing, if you typed www.killercoke.org into your web browser, you would arrive at the Killer Coke website. As the name implies, the site is hostile toward the Coca-Cola Company and supports the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke. So how is Coke a killer? The site maintains that security forces in Colombia have kidnapped, murdered, and tortured members of SINALTRAINAL (National Union of Food Industrial Workers) who work at Coca-Cola bottling plants. The claim is that these Coca-Cola plants hire violent paramilitary security guards who commit these atrocities. The Coca-Cola Company disputes this claim. However, the website is composed of testimonials, photographs, and resources attacking the company. A key element of the campaign in the United States is to target college campuses. Students pressure their school's administration to terminate vending contracts with Coca-Cola. Michigan State University, Rutgers University, and Hofstra University are but a handful of the schools that have ended contracts with Coca-Cola. Killer Coke moved from the Internet to the business press when *BusinessWeek* did a feature on the campaign in January 2006 ("'Killer Coke' or Innocent Abroad?" 2006). The Killer Coke campaign continues to pressure Coca-Cola through lost contracts, and the Internet is the epicenter of this effort.

The Internet is more than a source of fear for an organization, though. It is a resource that can be used to anticipate and respond to potential problems. An organization concerned with human rights, for example, can peruse a variety of human rights–oriented websites and blogs or follow human rights organizations on Twitter to get a feel for stakeholder sentiments and the development of human rights issues. These insights can guide actions designed to prevent possible crises.

The Internet is a source that organizations should not overlook. As measurement expert Katie Delayne Paine (2011) notes, "monitoring mainstream media is not enough" (p. 165). The Internet user population continues to grow, making it an increasingly important environmental information resource. The Internet serves as a dual information source: It can be used to access information also found in print or broadcast form, and it can be used to collect information unique to social media.

Larger organizations have begun creating dedicated social media monitoring centers, also known as listening platforms. These centers go by various names such as Gatorade's Social Media Mission Control Center and Dell's Social Media Listening Command Center (Swallow, 2010). One use of social media monitoring centers is to avoid social media crises. However, the primary use of these centers is customer relations (Ben-Zur, 2011). Work with existing organizational resources to develop an organization's crisis-sensing capabilities. The social media monitoring centers can be created by the organization itself or in collaboration with a social media monitoring company (Swallow, 2010).

Whether using a social media monitoring service or developing their own social media

monitoring center, crisis managers need to know the term *dashboard*. Paine (2011) defines a dashboard as "a technique for simplifying data reporting by displaying a small number of important summary measures together in one location" (p. 234). The term should make you think about a car. The car's dashboard holds the critical data for a driver, including speed, engine temperature, tire pressure, and oil level. A dashboard can be a visual representation of the data generated by the analysis of social media messages. Like drivers, crisis managers can see all the critical information they need on a properly designed dashboard.

Risk management examines sources that have more of an internal focus. Total quality management systematically assesses the manufacturing process in order to improve quality. Part of that process is to locate sources of defects (Milas, 1996), which can trigger the need for recalls (Mitroff, 1994). Environmental crisis exposure includes pollution abatement actions and threats to the environment posed by an organization. Polluting can lead to accidents, lawsuits, protests, or regulatory fines. Legal compliance audits make sure an organization is complying with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Failure to comply can result in lawsuits or fines. Financial audits review the financial health of the organization, which can indicate financially oriented crises such as shareholder rebellion.

Traditional insurance coverage indicates risks worth insuring against. Insurance risks include liability exposure, criminal exposure, and worker compensation exposure. All three areas can produce lawsuits and extremely negative publicity. Natural disaster exposure identifies what Mother Nature might do to the organization. An organization's managers must know if facilities are at risk of crises caused by floods, earthquakes, or volcanoes—natural actions typically not covered by insurance.

Safety, maintenance, and accident records reveal minor problems that could become crises. These records should be examined for patterns. Organizations have what are called near misses—something bad that almost happened. A series of near misses runs the risk of escalating into a major crisis. If there are a number of near misses, say, small hand injuries with a piece of equipment, it is possible that a major injury, such as amputation or death, could also occur. Action should be taken in the prevention phase to break the pattern of minor accidents. Similarly, a history of the same safety violation indicates that a major accident and injury could occur. Obviously, safety precautions are designed to prevent accidents and injuries. Unheeded, the workplace becomes unsafe and ripe for these troubling and preventable events (Komaki, Heinzmann, & Lawson, 1980).

Employee use of the Internet and e-mail also are sources of risk. Misuse of these online communication tools can result in information leaks, computer viruses or worms, discrimination and harassment lawsuits, or reduced bandwidth capacity. Concerns over online risks have led most companies to create Internet and e-mail use policies and to use software designed to monitor employee online behavior. A 2006 study found that 38% of large companies in the United Kingdom and the United States hired people to read worker e-mails (Rost, 2006). Online use policies lack any real meaning if the organization cannot

effectively determine whether their policies are being violated. The monitoring software can block access to inappropriate websites, review all e-mails for inappropriate language, or record and evaluate all employee web activity in terms of business-related and non-business-related site visits. Organizations assume unnecessary risk if they do not have and enforce employee Internet and e-mail use policies.

Product-tampering monitoring examines the manufacturing process and packaging for susceptibility to product tampering. Product tampering leads to recalls and lawsuits. Behavior profiling identifies the characteristics of potentially dangerous employees, typically those who may become violent. Violent employees can trigger workplace violence crises. Ethical climate surveys assess the organization for temptations and cultural blinders to problems. Such blinders are located by examining management attitudes and values about important concerns, such as sexual harassment. A weak ethical climate can encourage organizational misdeeds, such as check fraud, sexual harassment, or racial discrimination (Mitroff & McWinney, 1987; Soper, 1995).

Very few people have not heard of Enron and its fall from the list of most admired to most reviled corporations. At heart, the Enron tale is a story of an organization's culture precipitating a crisis. As Enron was winning honor after honor from the business press, its culture was characterized as aggressive. It was among the companies described as Most Admired, Best to Work For, and Most Innovative. However, an aggressive culture also made for a risk-taking culture. The company rapidly expanded into areas it knew little about. The expansion was required because Enron needed to keep its earnings high in order to maintain a strong stock price. Members of Congress referred to this as a "culture of greed" (Cable News Network, 2002).

Enron's risk taking had its downfall. Top management, led by Kenneth Lay, Jeffrey Skilling, and Andrew Fastow, had become arrogant and overly optimistic. They believed Enron could not fail, and its risk taking intensified. But Enron did begin to fail, and this meant revenues would drop. Being aggressive, top management engaged in very creative and illegal bookkeeping methods to hide losses and to feature gains. They crafted a fake financial front that cost investors billions of dollars when the company went bankrupt (Schuler, 2002). Enron's aggressive actions led it to ignore ethics in the pursuit of higher stock prices and profits (Brewer, Chandler, & Ferrell, 2006). It is safe to say that Enron was an ethically challenged organization; it had a morally bankrupt ethical climate. A similar fate can befall any company that fails to monitor and correct its own ethical climate and aspects of its culture that can promote rather than retard crises.

The sources for reputation monitoring are not well developed, but Table 4.1 identifies some logical choices, and they reflect the importance of stakeholders to reputation management, particularly the investor, customer, activist, and community stakeholders. Shareholder resolutions reflect the values and attitudes of those who own stocks. In 2006, Walmart investors rejected six different social responsibility shareholder resolutions, presumably because the resolutions did not reflect their priorities. Resolutions can reflect

social concerns, such as support for the UN Global Compact (a set of 10 environmental and social principles), or financial concerns, such as resolutions preventing the "poison pill" as a takeover defense. Most resolutions are designed to address social concerns. Shareholder resolutions provide insight into how the stockholders feel about important issues or the organization itself. Stakeholder complaints and inquires help to detect discontent among customers and to discover rumors. Early identification of discontent means that the organization can act to resolve the problem and make a customer happy, maintaining a positive relationship with this stakeholder (Dozier, 1992). As the Pampers example in Chapter 2 illustrated, social media is ideal for finding and addressing stakeholder expectations that are relevant to reputations.

Profit-making organizations cannot survive without customers, which makes them a critical source for reputation signs. Organizations must identify when their actions place customers at risk and when customers are unhappy with organizational operations or policies. In October 1996, an E. coli outbreak linked to Odwalla juices killed 16-month-old Anna Gimmestad and sickened over 70 other people. Odwalla juice was not pasteurized at that time. Pasteurization kills bacteria, but natural juice makers felt it harmed the product. Odwalla began flash pasteurization after the incident. The company launched a quick recall and covered medical expenses for those who were stricken. In addition, Odwalla was one of the first companies to use the Internet as part of its crisis management. It has been praised for its quick and caring response (Baker, n.d.).

Table 4.1 Potential Crisis Sources to Monitor

Issues Management Sources

TRADITIONAL

News media: Newspapers, television news, news and business magazines

Trade journals: Medical and science journals

Newsletters: Government publications

Public opinion polls: Public opinion experts

Stakeholder actions

ONLINE

News and business wires

Online newspapers, magazines, and trade publications

Archives for professional associations, special interest groups, and government agencies

Consumer-generated media: Websites, blogs, and discussion groups

Newsgroups

Risk Assessment Sources

Total quality management	Liability exposure	Natural disaster exposure
Environmental crisis exposure	Criminal exposure	Product-tampering exposure
Legal compliance audits	Financial audits	Ethical climate surveys
Workers compensation exposure	Safety, accident records	Behavioral profiling
Internet use monitoring		

Reputation Sources

Consumer-generated media: Websites, blogs, and discussion groups

Stakeholder comments sent to the organization

However, from a warning signs detection standpoint, Odwalla was a dismal failure. There were a number of warning signs prior to the October 1996 E. coli tragedy. Dave Stevenson, the head of Odwalla's quality assurance, had recommended using a chlorine rinse to increase the killing of bacteria. Senior executives rejected the idea and kept the far less effective acid-wash method. Even the supplier of the acid wash told Odwalla it was only 8% effective at killing E. coli. In the lawsuits that followed the outbreak, Odwalla admitted to more than 300 reports of bacterial poisoning prior to the 1996 event. Moreover, the U.S. Army had denied Odwalla access to military commissaries. Just 4 months before the outbreak, Army inspectors found an unacceptably high bacteria count in its sample and decided the risk was too high to sell in commissaries (Entine, 1998, 1999). Had Odwalla taken the warning signs seriously and either changed to the chlorine wash or switched to flash pasteurization, the 1996 outbreak would probably not have occurred.

One important source of concern is public criticism of the organization. Heath (1988) recommends that "all public criticism should prompt corporate leaders and operations managers to conduct studies to determine whether the charges are true and whether key publics are believing the allegations" (p. 105). Complaints can be found in inquiries

customers make to an organization or protests from activists. Inquiries may reveal an actual problem or a rumor, as people call to confirm the information they heard. Consider Nestlé's online confrontation with Greenpeace and others concerned about rainforests.

In the spring of 2010, Greenpeace began a campaign designed to force Nestlé to stop sourcing palm oil from Sinar Mas and other suppliers that illegally destroy rainforests as part of their efforts to extract palm oil. The campaign featured orangutans because rainforest destruction threatens their existence. There were protests in Europe, with people dressed as orangutans, but it was the Internet where the public complaints were most active. People could visit the Greenpeace web page titled *Ask Nestlé to Give Rainforests a Break*, a play on the commercial jingle for the company's Kit Kat candy bar. The site provided information and a parody video of a Kit Kat commercial in which the pieces of the candy bar were orangutan fingers that dripped blood (Greenpeace, 2010). Even more impressive was the hijacking of Nestlé's Facebook page. Suddenly a little-noticed Facebook page was flooded with criticisms for the company's palm oil policies and killing of orangutans (Leonard, 2010). In March, Nestlé announced that by 2015 it would be using only certified-sustainable palm oil. But the public criticism continued and deemed Nestlé's action as too weak (Leonard, 2010). On May 17, 2010, Nestlé went further in response to its critics by announcing an alliance with the Forest Trust to develop responsible sourcing guidelines for palm oil and to help fight deforestation of the rainforests (Nestlé, 2013). Public pressure, amplified by social networking, created a crisis and forced Nestlé to change its palm oil policies.

Here's another example. Febreze is a fabric refresher manufactured by Procter & Gamble (P&G). One of its main selling points is its ability to eliminate pet odors. So when a rumor began circulating on the Internet that Febreze kills pets, there was reason for concern. Here is a sample message:

> There have been multiple instances of dogs and birds that have died or became very ill after being exposed to Febreze, a deodorizer/air freshener. Febreze contains zinc chloride, which is very dangerous for animals. Please do not use Febreze anywhere near your pets! If you have used it near your pets or on their bedding, clean the bedding area thoroughly to remove the Febreze, and move the animals away from the area. Please pass this information on to other pet owners/caretakers, before more animals are injured or killed, and find a safer method of odor control. (About.com, 2002, paras. 1–3)

P&G soon began receiving phone calls and e-mails asking if Febreze was safe around pets. The P&G response was "Yes!" The product had been tested and proven safe around dogs and cats. P&G created a special section of its Febreze website to debunk the myth. People were told of Febreze's safety and directed to testimonials from the National Animal Poison Control Center and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (*Hanging in the Febreze*, 2011). P&G used the consumer concerns to fight the rumor and protect the sale of Febreze.

COLLECT THE INFORMATION

Once potential environmental information sources are located, crisis managers face the challenge of gathering the information. Content analysis, interviews, surveys, focus groups, and informal contacts are among the most frequently used collection tools. Familiarity with these tools is an important crisis management asset.

When utilizing any print, online, or broadcast source, content analysis can be useful. It involves the systematic coding and classification of written materials, be they news stories, articles in other publications, or transcripts of focus groups or interviews. Effective content analysis requires the development of coding categories and expertise in using the categories. Coding categories are the boxes in which discrete pieces of information are placed. Each category needs a thorough written definition that indicates what is appropriate for it, and these categories must be mutually exclusive—no message should fit into more than one category (Stacks, 2002; T. D. Stewart, 2002). People who use the categories, the coders, must be trained in their use. Coders must be able to place similar messages in the same categories. This consistency is called *reliability.* Reliability allows different people to code messages consistently. Such consistency allows for comparisons of the coded data. Content analysis converts the written information into quantifiable data—the words become numbers that can be analyzed using statistics. Some examples may help to clarify the content analysis process.

Most organizations have established categories for accidents and safety violations. People are trained to understand the differences in the accident and safety categories so that they can accurately record these events. An organization can examine the data to see if certain accidents or safety violations have increased or decreased over time. For example, an organization might be interested in the number of falls in a particular area of the organization. Systematic coding of accidents permits an accurate analysis of the fall data. Similarly, organizations should develop categories for coding customer complaints. It is not enough to know the sheer number of complaints received; organizations should know the type and frequency of different varieties of complaints. By categorizing customer complaints, organizations can identify problem areas by the increase of complaints in those areas. If an airline receives increasing complaints about how canceled flights are handled, it needs to improve its customer service relative to canceled flights. Systematic coding allows for comparisons that could not be made if the written information had not been quantified. It is the recording and quantifying of the material that qualifies content analysis as a form of information collecting.

The first step in soliciting information from stakeholders is for the crisis team to construct a stakeholder map that lists all possible stakeholders (J. E. Grunig & Repper, 1992). Box 4.1 presents sample stakeholder maps that HP and Tesco use to guide their stakeholder engagement effort. Then the crisis team would identify the stakeholders relevant to the most highly ranked crises. Interviews, surveys, focus groups, or key contacts can be used to collect information from stakeholders. Interviewers ask people questions about a particular subject in an organized fashion. The interviewers develop and follow an

interview schedule. Preparation is essential. The person collecting the information must have an organized approach to the interview if it is to yield useful information (C. J. Stewart & Cash, 1997). Surveys collect information about people's perceptions, attitudes, and opinions. Surveys can be conducted by having people complete questionnaires or by having researchers ask stakeholders the questions. Focus groups are collections of specific stakeholders who are brought together to listen to and respond to questions as a group. Open-ended questions are used to encourage interaction and to probe the nature of people's beliefs. Key contacts are community, industry, or organization leaders who are selected because of their expertise on a subject. Using public opinion or issue experts is a form of key contact (Baskin & Aronoff, 1988).

BOX 4.1 SAMPLE STAKEHOLDER MAPS

HP

Stakeholder engagement is integral to global citizenship, and HP works to build strong, mutually productive relationships with our diverse stakeholders. They include:

- Communities
- Customers
- Employees
- Investors
- Legislators and regulators
- Industry analysts and media
- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
- Suppliers
- Universities (Stakeholder Map, 2010)

Tesco

- Customers
- Employees
- Investors
- Communities
- Suppliers
- Governments and regulators
- Nongovernmental organizations (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, n.d.)

ANALYZE THE INFORMATION

Collecting information about issues, risks, and stakeholder relationships is of no value unless the information is analyzed to determine whether it contains crisis risks. Analyzing information creates knowledge (Geraghty & Desouza, 2005). Crisis managers determine whether the information really does suggest a possible crisis. The premise behind finding warning signs early is to locate those that can significantly impact the organization and to take action to manage them (Dutton & Duncan, 1987; Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1996; Heath & Nelson, 1986). Analysis is the process of understanding if and how a warning sign might impact the organization (Heath & Nelson, 1986). Crisis managers need criteria for evaluating issues, risks, and reputation threats.

We can build threat assessment analysis around two factors: likelihood and impact. Likelihood is the probability that a threat will become a crisis. Impact is the effect the crisis can have on stakeholders and the organization. Typically, each threat is given a score from 1 to 10 for likelihood and threat, with 1 being low and 10 high. When crisis managers analyze the issue, risk, and reputation threats in terms of likelihood and impact, they can determine whether each threat warrants further attention and/or action. Likelihood and impact have slightly different meanings for the issues, risk, and reputation.

For issues, likelihood is the probability of an issue gaining momentum. An issue with momentum is developing and is more likely to affect the organization. Some indicators of momentum are sophisticated promotion of the issue, heavy mass media coverage, strong Internet presence, and a strong self-interest link between an issue and stakeholders. The 1989 anti-Alar campaign illustrates an issue with momentum. Alar is a chemical that was used to treat apples. Within a year of launching its campaign, the anti-Alar coalition headed by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) had caused Alar to be removed from use. The Alar issue had professionals crafting the publicity effort: sophisticated promotion. Celebrity appearances, including from Meryl Streep, helped to garner massive publicity: heavy media coverage. And Alar was treated as a threat to innocent children: a strong self-interest link between Alar and consumers (Center & Jackson, 1995).

Impact refers to how strongly the issue can affect profits, reputations, or operations. It involves the use of forecasting, which projects the potential effect of an issue on the organization. There are at least 150 forecasting techniques used in business. A detailed discussion of forecasting is beyond the scope of this book, but Coates, Coates, Jarratt, and Heinz (1986), Ewing (1979), and Heath (1997) offer more details on forecasting techniques. Organizations should use those forecasting methods with which they are familiar. Only issues with high impact would be considered crises because a crisis must be disruptive to organizational operations.

For risks, likelihood is the probability that the risk can or will become an event—the risk will cause something to happen. This estimates the possibility of the risk being exploited or maturing into an event. Impact is, again, how much the event might impact the

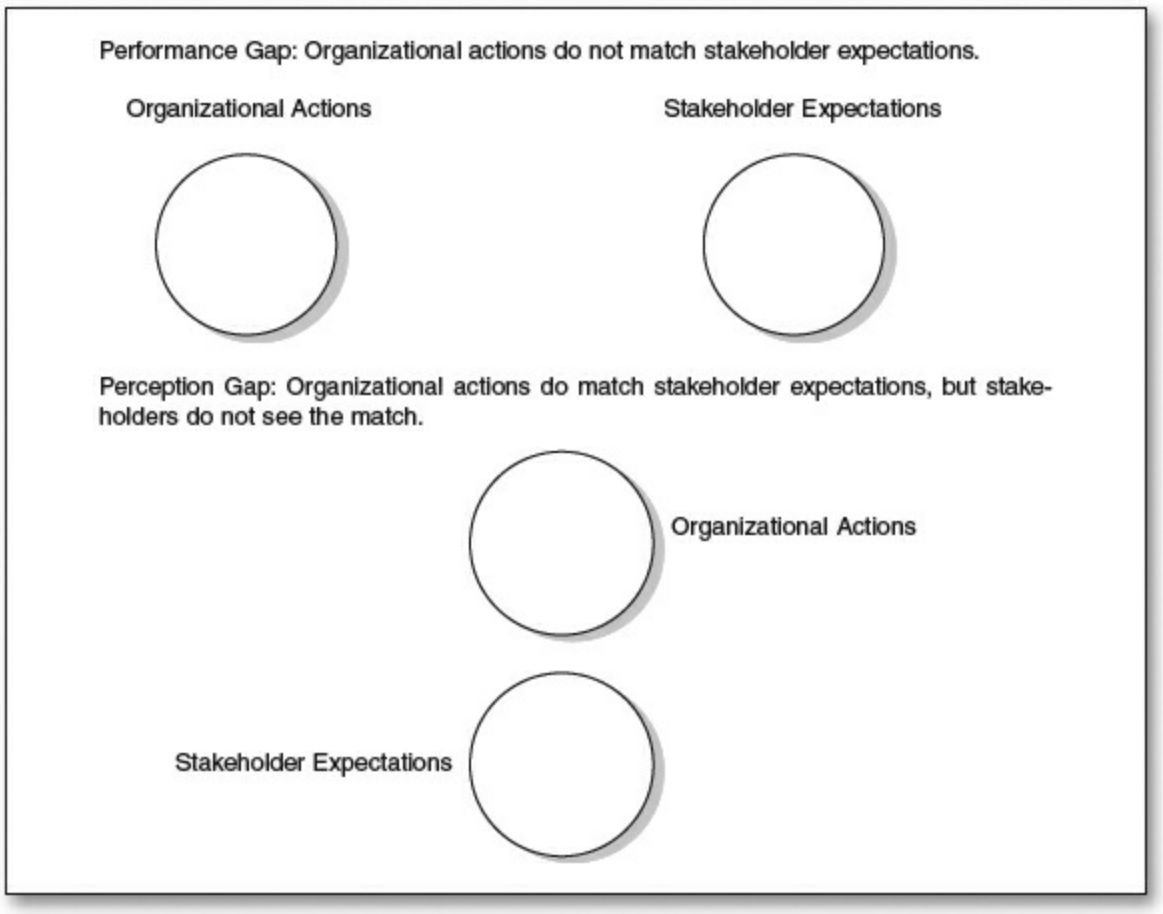
organization and its stakeholders. In this context, it includes disruption to organizational routines and potential damage to people, facilities, processes, or reputation (Levitt, 1997).

For reputation, the evaluation of likelihood and impact is not as clearly developed and a little more complex. Before evaluating likelihood and impact, crisis managers must determine if an expectation gap exists. As noted earlier, reputations are built around stakeholder expectations. Different stakeholder groups will have different expectations for organizational behaviors. For instance, investors want the organization to make money, employees want adequate pay and medical benefits, and community groups want the organization to be engaged in the life of the community. The point is that crisis managers must identify the expectations held by each major stakeholder group. Through research, they can isolate stakeholder expectations.

Once the expectations are known, crisis managers must determine whether the stakeholders perceive the organization as meeting those expectations; they search for gaps. Figure 4.1 illustrates two types of gaps. The first is based on performance; the organization is not doing what it needs to do to meet expectations. The second occurs when stakeholders fail to perceive that the organization is meeting expectations. Perception is the key. Even if an organization has made significant efforts to reduce pollution, if the stakeholders do not know about it, there is a gap.

If stakeholders have concerns based on expectation gaps, they can become a reputation threat by taking action against the organization and generating negative publicity. That threat is intensified by the various Internet communication channels (Conway, Ward, Lewis, & Bernhardt, 2007). Not all expectation gaps lead to crises. Moreover, no organization has the time, money, or personnel to address every expectation gap. So what is an organization to do? The answer is to prioritize stakeholders and focus your resources on those that have the greatest potential to initiate crises. Crisis managers must be able to differentiate between mild and serious threats. The challenge is how to determine the likelihood and impact of an expectations gap. One option is to examine the salience of the stakeholder involved in the expectation gap. Stakeholder salience, their importance to the organization, can then be converted into likelihood and impact scores. Stakeholder salience is a function of power, legitimacy, and willingness.

Figure 4.1 Expectation Gaps


Performance Gap: Organizational actions do not match stakeholder expectations.
Organizational Actions
Stakeholder Expectations
Perception Gap: Organizational actions do match stakeholder expectations, but stakeholders do not see the match.
Organizational Actions
Stakeholder Expectations

Power is the ability of the stakeholder to get the organization to do something it would not do otherwise. Power relates to the stakeholder's ability to disrupt organizational operations. Stakeholders who control essential resources or can form coalitions have strong power. Control over essential resources permits a stakeholder to disrupt organizational processes. For instance, employees can stop the production process or the delivery of goods and services. As mentioned earlier, in 1997, UPS drivers launched a strike that crippled the company's ability to deliver its primary service.

Coalition formation supplies power through numbers. As stakeholders join forces with one another, their power increases (R. K. Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997; Rowley, 1997). An example would be an activist group that persuades shareholders and customers to join its efforts to pressure an organization for change. The combination of activists, customers, and shareholders was instrumental in convincing Levi Strauss to close its production facilities in Myanmar. Activists persuaded customers and shareholders that facilities in Myanmar contributed to human rights violations there. In turn, customers and shareholders questioned Levi Strauss's operations there. Levi Strauss felt that the stigma of human rights abuse was reason enough to leave Myanmar (Cooper, 1997). The Killer Coke campaign has followed a similar strategy. Alone, the activists would have little impact, but combined with shareholders and customers, they can exercise great power.

Stakeholder power is enhanced by the ability to take action against the organization.

Stakeholders need resources (e.g., money) and skill in using communication channels if they are to put pressure on an organization (Ryan, 1991). Let us return to the NRDC's effort to ban Alar. The NRDC had money to hire professional communicators to develop a major publicity campaign promoting the danger of Alar. The campaign raised awareness of Alar danger from 0% to 95% in less than a month (Center & Jackson, 1995). Money and publicity skills created the perception of Alar as a cancer threat to children.

Legitimacy refers to actions that are considered desirable, proper, or appropriate according to some system. A stakeholder concern is more serious when it is deemed legitimate by other stakeholders. If other stakeholders see a concern as legitimate, they are likely to support the need to take action. Illegitimate issues are easy for other stakeholders to ignore because they are considered inappropriate or unimportant. Ignoring a legitimate concern makes the organization appear callous to the other stakeholders. They ask, "Why doesn't the organization address this reasonable concern?" Offending other stakeholders increases the risk of the threat spreading to additional organization-stakeholder relationships. Crisis managers should determine whether other stakeholders will view the concern as legitimate. This requires knowing the values and social responsibility expectations of various stakeholder groups (R. K. Mitchell et al., 1997).

Willingness refers to stakeholders' desire to confront the organization about the problem. A problem must be important for them, and their relationship to the organization must be relatively weak. Importance prompts stakeholders to take action. Why push a problem if it is unimportant? And stakeholders are less likely to pursue a problem when they have a favorable relationship with the organization. Once more, the Alar case illustrates the point. The NRDC considered Alar to be salient; it was the group's major concern at the time. The NRDC seemed to have no real relationship with the apple growers, the group affected most by the anti-Alar campaign. Documentation of the case makes no mention of the two sides ever meeting to discuss the concern prior to the launch of the NRDC's anti-Alar publicity campaign (Center & Jackson, 1995). A favorable relationship encourages both sides to seek a nonconfrontational approach to problem solving (Grunig & Repper, 1992).

Let us return to the Greenpeace–Nestlé palm oil case to illustrate power, legitimacy, and willingness. Greenpeace is an important activist organization that generated power by hijacking Nestlé's Facebook page and generating negative traditional media coverage and social media comments. Nestlé could not ignore the public relations pressure. Other stakeholders supported Greenpeace because the concern was legitimate. Most people feel we should protect the rainforests. Greenpeace's communication efforts showed it was willing to exert pressure about the issue. Even after Nestlé made minimal effort to address the problem initially, Greenpeace kept the pressure on for 2 more months until there was significant movement on the deforestation concern.

Power, legitimacy, and willingness can be translated into impact and likelihood. High power and legitimacy indicate a strong impact. Stakeholders can disrupt the organization and are likely to be perceived by others as having a valid (legitimate) reason for doing so.

Therefore, power and legitimacy can be used to establish an impact score. Legitimacy and willingness suggest a strong likelihood of occurrence. Willingness increases the chance of a stakeholder taking action, while legitimacy increases the possibility of other stakeholders supporting the action. Thus, legitimacy and willingness can be used to establish a likelihood score.

Sentiment analysis assigns a quantitative positive/negative mood score to text. The process involves detecting, extracting, and classifying the sentiment that appears in text. Sentiment analysis is a method that is used in subjectivity analysis. Subjectivity analysis seeks to detect "private states" such as emotions and sentiments. Sentiment analysis is a means of deriving private states from text (Montoyo, Martinez-Barco, & Balahur, 2012). One of the pieces of critical information found on dashboards provided by social media monitoring companies is sentiment analysis. In most cases, the sentiment analysis is derived from a computer analysis of social media messages. It is important to note that there are questions about the accuracy of these automated content analyses. Automated coding has been shown to have only a 60% to 80% accuracy level compared to human coding (Mullich, 2012). However, the analyses are accurate enough to be of value to crisis managers, and the companies keep working to improve the accuracy (Sterne, 2010).

Summary

By assessing the threat information, crisis managers create knowledge. That knowledge is an understanding of how important each threat might be to the organization. We can refine crisis threat assessment by creating a formula for calculating crisis threat values: Crisis Threat = Likelihood x Organizational Impact x Stakeholder Impact. For those who like abbreviations, we can write the formula as CT = L x OI x SI. Earlier in this chapter, issue and risk impact were noted as involving both stakeholders and organizations. Crisis managers should think of both types of impact when assessing a crisis threat. A running theme in this book is the primary importance of stakeholder safety during a crisis. By incorporating stakeholder impact into crisis threat assessments, we further honor the commitment to stakeholder safety.

Combined, the first three steps in crisis prevention form the crisis-sensing mechanism, a systematic means of collecting crisis risk information that is built on three points: (1) locating the source of crisis risk information, (2) funneling the information to a central location, and (3) making sure the information is analyzed—converted into knowledge. Sources, collection tools, and evaluation criteria are the raw materials used to construct the crisis-sensing mechanism—the crisis radar and tracking system. No one crisis-sensing mechanism is right for all organizations. Each organization has quirks that must be accommodated, but some basic ideas can be offered.

The crisis-sensing mechanism can be viewed as knowledge management (KM). It finds and shares what is known by an organization or its external stakeholders. KM differentiates

between *information* and *knowledge.* Information simply places facts in context, while knowledge analyzes the information so that it is usable by people in the organization (McKeen, Zack, & Singh, 2006; Rollins & Halinen, 2005). There is a close connection between KM and some aspects of crisis management; knowledge is essential to all phases of crisis management. In fact, "managing knowledge well is key to enhancing an organization's ability to deal with business crises" (Wang & Belardo, 2005, p. 7).

The crisis-sensing mechanism, a KM strategy, is a means of finding the knowledge an organization needs (Wang & Belardo, 2005). It attempts to create a repository of warning sign knowledge by locating, collating, and analyzing the crisis risk information or existing crisis knowledge.

Crisis sensing begins by determining what information-sensing mechanisms already exist in your organization. Avoid recreating the wheel. Review the issue management sources, risk sources, and reputation sources to see if they are comprehensive. Find out where your organization currently collects warning sign–related information or already processes it into knowledge. New procedures should be developed only if key sources are being overlooked. For instance, if no efforts are being made to scan relevant activist groups, add that as a source. A similar review should be undertaken for information-gathering techniques. Keep in mind that if you have the financial resources, you can hire vendors to help you scan, especially for issue and reputation information. Pay particular attention to how information and knowledge, such as publicity, are coded. A common weakness in information collection is a coding system that is too general and misses important details contained in the information (Denbow & Culbertson, 1985).

Consider this example that illustrates the importance of details. Let's say a retail store tracks its media coverage by collecting and analyzing news stories that mention the organization. A general coding system might simply count the total number of positive and negative comments about the retail store. The analysis provides a global evaluation of the reputation: Is it favorable or unfavorable? No insight is provided into why the media image is favorable or unfavorable. A more specific coding system might include the following categories: sales staff, customer service, selection, merchandise quality, value and pricing, store appearance, and parking. The retail store would have separate evaluations for the seven categories. Store managers would know the exact areas where the store's image was strong and where it needed improvement.

Second, the organization must establish mechanisms and procedures for funneling relevant information and knowledge to the crisis manager or the crisis department. An organization should have at least one person who is dedicated full-time to crisis management (Coombs, 2006a). Crisis sensing is easier if there is an entire department, but many organizations are lucky to have one crisis manager. Crisis managers cannot process information they have not received nor attend to warning signs (knowledge) never encountered. Crisis managers must receive the scanning information and knowledge in a timely fashion and must carefully analyze the information for the warning signs. Various

areas of the organization and possibly some vendors are likely to be responsible for different pieces of internal information and knowledge. Some organization units involved in scanning include operations and manufacturing, marketing and sales, finance, human resources, legal, customer communications and satisfaction, environmental and safety engineering, public relations and public affairs, engineering, shipping and distribution, security, and quality assurance.

The many organization units and vendors hired to scan must send this information and knowledge to the crisis team as soon as possible after they first receive and evaluate the information. The crisis manager becomes the center of a larger crisis-sensing mechanism. He or she must act as a functioning unit that is integrated within the flow of organizational activities, information, and knowledge exchange. Channeling information and knowledge sounds easier than it is. Consider that most organizations have difficulty collecting and analyzing information from customers (Rollins & Halinen, 2005). Now add information from a number of additional stakeholders, and your crisis-sensing mechanism becomes a real challenge.

Third, the crisis manager's assessment criteria for warning sign–related information must be carefully developed. This discussion provides general criteria for assessing issues, risks, and reputation threats. Crisis managers may wish to add their own organization-specific assessment criteria. The crisis team must determine which criteria they would like to use, develop additional criteria if need be, and determine precise definitions for the assessment criteria. Without precise definitions, the crisis manager is not able to apply the assessment criteria consistently. Last, the crisis-sensing mechanism must be tested to determine whether the various parts are integrated effectively. Running carefully selected and controlled information through the system is one way to assess the integration's effectiveness.

Walmart, for instance, has a crisis-sensing mechanism for staying ahead of crises. Jason Jackson, Walmart's director of emergency management, uses what he terms *watchdog positions.* The watchdogs monitor a variety of sources, including the Internet, news reports, and information from local stores, to identify possible disruptions to business. One source they monitor is weather, and hurricane Katrina stands as testimony to the value of weather scanning. Before Katrina made landfall, Walmart had 45 trucks loaded with essential supplies ready for delivery. As Barbaro and Gillis (2005) comment, "Wal-Mart is being held up as a model for logistical efficiency and nimble disaster planning, which have allowed it to quickly deliver staples such as water, fuel and toilet paper to thousands of evacuees" (para. 4). When watchdogs find a threat, they relay that information to the emergency management team. The emergency management team evaluates the information and decides what action, if any, should be taken. Johnson conducts regular training and testing of Walmart's system (Rojas, 2006). The Walmart watchdogs concentrate on risk management and operational concerns, such as weather and security.

However, Walmart's crisis-sensing mechanism had not been tuned to issues management

and reputation management. In 2005 and 2006, the company moved to improve both of these aspects through the hiring of external agencies and internal personnel. Walmart also launched its first-ever reputation advertising campaign around this time period. This effort was designed to shore up the company's reputation with customers and employees (Hays, 2003). However, these issues management and reputation management efforts are not connected with the risk management efforts to build a comprehensive crisis-sensing mechanism. Walmart still has room to expand and to improve its crisis-sensing mechanism.

Crisis sensing can seem daunting, especially considering the need to scan so many sources. Organizations that can afford it can find assistance from monitoring services, which now cover traditional media and the Internet, including social media. Prominent monitoring services include BurrellesLuce, CyberAlert, and dna13. These companies aid in finding, retrieving, and even analyzing media, a large part of the external threat sources.

TAKE PREVENTIVE ACTION

Once threats have been evaluated, crisis managers determine whether to take action. Many threats are too minor and can be ignored. Crisis managers must determine what actions to take on the serious threats. One option is to monitor the threat if it does not pose an immediate danger. Monitoring involves following the development of the warning signs. The crisis team continuously collects and analyzes information about the warning signs, looking for changes that indicate whether the risk is becoming more or less likely to evolve into a crisis. The information sources, collection tools, and analytic criteria used in scanning are employed in monitoring. The key differences are a search for more detailed information and the continuous application of the search process in monitoring.

If a threat is serious enough, action is taken to diffuse it. Actions create changes that eliminate or reduce the likelihood of a warning sign becoming a crisis. Actions are taken to manage issues, to reduce risks, and to build or maintain reputations. A few examples will illustrate this point. Say that the issues management unit of a company learns of a proposal to tighten air quality standards. Action is taken to prevent or postpone the new regulation, thereby averting a possible plant closing while the plant implements ways to reduce emissions. Or a safety review finds that workers are not following the unloading directions for hazardous chemicals. A refresher training course is offered along with new, stricter safety procedures regulating the unloading of chemicals. The risk of a hazardous materials accident is reduced. And another: A number of complaints appear online about chain guards falling off of a chain saw. Customers are offered replacements and design changes made to prevent the guards from falling off. Accidents and a major conflict with customers are averted, and the reputation is maintained.

The final example comes from actions taken by Twitter. In 2013, there were high-profile hacks to the Twitter accounts of Burger King and Jeep. While social media crises for Burger King and Jeep, the situations were more of a traditional crisis for Twitter. Organizations

using Twitter were concerned their accounts could be hacked next—there was an operational concern. In May 2013, Twitter took action to reduce the likelihood of hacking by strengthening login verification with a form of two-factor authentication. Knowing no system is perfect, Twitter warned, "Of course, even with this new security option turned on, it's still important for you to use a strong password and follow the rest of our advice for keeping your account secure" (O'Leary, 2013, para. 4). The exact nature of the action will depend on the nature of the threat and best options for trying to reduce or eliminate that threat. Refer back to Chapter 3 to review the principles that guide action in issues management, risk management, and reputation management.

EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE THREAT REDUCTION

Evaluation monitors the threat to determine whether the action taken to address it had any effect. Without monitoring, the organization does not know if the change has been effective—has it reduced or eliminated the chance of a crisis? For example, an organization would want to know whether the new safety procedures and policies made the workplace less hazardous. The only way to know if safety has improved is to monitor workplace behaviors. If workers are now engaging in safer behavior—fewer violations of safety procedures—then the safety changes are working. Never assume any change is for the better. Some changes produce no results, while others may intensify the warning signs or risks, thereby moving an organization closer to a crisis. Monitoring involves a regular review of any changes designed to reduce warning signs. The review determines the effectiveness of the changes and whether any additional modifications are warranted (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992).

To evaluate the results of issues management, the final resolution of the issue is examined. Evaluation consists of comparing the actual resolution of the issue to the intended or desired one. Success is measured by how closely the actual resolution matches the desired one (Jones & Chase, 1979). In earlier examples, the railroad and pharmaceutical issue managers were successful. The trucking legislation was defeated, and the government stopped pressing for direct-to-consumer regulation—the actual and intended resolutions were a match. Evaluation does not end with the issue's resolution. Issues are cyclical, and they have the potential to reappear. For example, the health care debate of the 1990s is much like the debate that took place in the 1940s and 1950s. During his first term, President Clinton introduced the idea of health insurance for all Americans. The government would help to insure Americans who were currently uninsured for various reasons. In the 1940s and 1950s, President Truman advocated national health insurance. His idea was to make health insurance a reality for all Americans through government assistance. The national health insurance issue may disappear for a while, but it never dies. In 2009, President Obama began a strong push for healthcare reform. In March 2010, Congress passed healthcare reform. However, opponents vowed to make it an issue in future elections (Dunham, 2010) and continue to challenge the law.

The cyclical nature of issues means an issue should be reexamined at least annually to see if it is gaining new momentum and might once again threaten the organization (Crable & Vibbert, 1985). We must remember that issues do not always move through their complete lifecycle to become dormant. We typically consider an issue to be dormant (resolved) when a decision has been made about the issue. However, people can lose interest in an issue at any point in the lifecycle. An issue goes dormant—is resolved—when people choose to ignore the issue. An issue moving to dormancy prior to a policy decision being made is a victory for the side seeking to prevent action on the issue.

The evaluation of risk management—risk aversion, to be more specific—is an ongoing concern. Periodic reviews of the risk are conducted to determine the effectiveness of the risk aversion program (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Evaluation compares the level of risk before and after the risk aversion program is implemented. The review is continued to determine whether the program works over time. Was the risk reduction a statistical aberration, or has the lower level of risk been maintained over the course of the program? The risk must be monitored continually to ensure that the threat does not reemerge.

For specific problems, stakeholders have stated what the concern is and have probably offered advice on how to solve the problem. If the organization decides to take action, management should ask the disgruntled stakeholders if the resolution was satisfactory. The feedback from stakeholders will serve as the measure of success.

Success in closing an expectation gap is determined by whether stakeholders perceive the organization as meeting expectations. The organization and stakeholders must co-create meaning—they must share a similar interpretation of the organization's performance on the desired expectations—for expectation gaps to be closed (Botan & Taylor, 2004). The most effective way to determine whether an expectation gap has been closed is to use surveys to assess stakeholder perceptions of expectation performance before and after efforts are initiated to close the gap. The survey provides the evaluative data necessary to determine whether stakeholder perceptions have changed. For example, one item can ask stakeholders to rate on a scale of 1 to 7 (7 being the highest), "Does the organization reflect your concern for the environment?" If the original evaluation was 2.5, a post–communication effort score of 4 would be considered a success, indicating that stakeholders see greater similarities between their concerns and the organization's behavior. Correctly identifying expectation gaps is the focus of organizational issues management, so the same evaluation method would apply to it as well.

PARACRISIS

As noted in Chapter 2, crisis prevention raises the idea of paracrises, which occur when crisis managers must publicly manage a crisis threat. The effort to manage the crisis threat frequently mimics a crisis response. Paracrises are likely to occur for rumors, challenges, and product harm. These three are most likely to have stakeholders publicly question an

organization's ability and warrant a public response to the crisis threat. The public connection is obvious for rumors and challenges, as illustrated in Chapter 2. A product harm case is instructive at this point. Maclaren makes baby strollers. Parents love their babies and try to keep them from harm, so when reports began to emerge online that some children in the United States were having their fingers pinched, cut, or even amputated when parents were folding up the strollers, Maclaren issued a recall by sending out repair kits. The repair kit involved a safety guard that could be placed over the hinge. The online concerns created awareness of the product harm. In fact, when the threat is product harm, a paracrisis and a crisis fuse into one and illustrate how paracrises blur the distinction between precrisis and crisis communication. A few reports of injuries are a crisis threat, and crisis managers must decide when that threat is really a crisis and warrants corrective action. It should be noted that Maclaren said the injuries were from improper use of the stroller—children should not be so close when a parent is folding it. Moreover, the recall only pertained to the United States. The same product was sold and used in Europe, but the stroller threat was not deemed at the crisis level for Europe.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Egos Mobil Phone Advertisement

You work for Egos Mobil Phones, a company that was once independent but is now owned by Sprint. The company kept the name "Egos" because it was a very recognizable brand. Egos Mobil was once part of business empire of celebrity CEO James Egos. He sold the company 2 years ago to Sprint. It is December 10 and Egos has begun running a number of online advertisements. The campaign is edgy with hopes of some of the short advertisements going viral. One advertisement does generate buzz online but not in a good way. The video shows a man covering a woman's eyes with the caption "The gift of Christmas surprise. Necklace? Or chloroform?" Many people found the advertisement tasteless and seemingly to indirectly support rape. People express their displeasure online. Negative comments are even posted to James Egos's blog. Egos condemns the advertisement on his blog.

- What advice would you give to Egos management about how to respond to the situation?
- Would you consider this a paracrisis or crisis? What led you to your choice?

CONCLUSION

A crisis prevention program is a valuable part of the crisis management process. The crisis team uses the warning signs from signal detection to target situations that could become

crises. The team then takes actions designed to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of the warning signs developing into crises. As Paine (2011) states so eloquently, "The single best way to avoid a crisis is to listen carefully to your audiences and respond to threats *before* they get out of hand" (p. 165).

But prevention is not as easy as it sounds. Finding potential crises is a type of warning environment, and a warning environment involves ambiguous information and penalties for incorrect actions. Possible crises can be hard to detect, and failure to do so can result in a crisis. Unfortunately, organizational politics can complicate or even block efforts to reduce risks. (Chapter 7 offers suggestions for combating resistance to preventative actions.)

Ideally, crisis teams must remember to monitor their corrective actions on a regular basis to determine whether preventative actions have produced the desired effects. However, an organization cannot count on avoiding all crises. Hence, the need remains for crisis preparation, which is the subject of Chapters 5 and 6.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: RISK TAKING

Crisis leaders should be open to trying new things and to unconventional thinking. A danger when scanning for crisis threats is that managers may respond negatively when they do find a threat. The threat-rigidity phenomenon says that people are more conservative and restrictive with sharing information as a threat intensifies. Leaders need to prevent crisis threats from triggering rigidity (James & Wooten, 2010). Leaders must emphasize the need to not only find crisis threats but share that information with others and attempt solutions designed to reduce the likelihood of a threat becoming a crisis. The crisis leadership competencies of sense making and creativity are important for prevention as well. Sense making helps leaders interpret the warning signs, while creativity aids in anticipating how the threat might develop and impact both the organization and its stakeholders.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Locate and read information about fair-trade coffee. Do you think it is an idea that will gain additional support among coffee growers? Is Starbucks wise to increase its support for fair-trade coffee?
2. What barriers do you see to organizations taking preventative measures? How might they be overcome?
3. What are some organizational barriers to creating a crisis-sensing mechanism? How might you overcome those barriers?

4. How is social media changing crisis prevention efforts?
5. What recommendations would you make to a small organization about how best to monitor the online environment?
6. Does it make sense to distinguish between traditional websites and social media, or should we treat all online communication channels the same?
7. Why is it useful to include impact evaluations for both stakeholders and organizations?
8. Do you agree or disagree with Maclaren's choice not to recall the strollers in Europe?
9. Why should managers bother identifying red flags?

CHAPTER 5

Crisis Preparation: Part I

During crisis preparation, organizations ready themselves for the inevitable crises that will befall them. Organizations should not fall victim to hubris and assume that their preventative measures will protect them from harm. All organizations should prepare to handle crises by taking six steps: (1) diagnosing vulnerabilities, (2) assessing crisis types, (3) selecting and training a crisis management team, (4) selecting and training a spokesperson, (5) developing a crisis management plan (CMP), and (6) reviewing the crisis communication system. This chapter covers the first four points, and Chapter 6 is devoted to the CMP and the communication system.

DIAGNOSING VULNERABILITIES

As noted at the beginning of this book, an array of potential crises can happen to an organization. However, every organization has specific crisis vulnerabilities (Fink, 1986), which are a function of the organization's industry, size, location, operations, personnel, and risk factors. For example, a hotel must ensure the safety of hundreds of people who are in an unfamiliar building, and food producers run the risk of contamination that can poison their customers. Different types of organizations are prone to different types of crises. Location should not be overlooked, either. Location dictates which natural disasters are likely to strike. In addition, if your organization is near a facility that could have a serious crisis, such as a chemical leak, or be a strategic target for terrorists, that facility's crisis can become your crisis. Crisis managers must identify the crises for which their organizations and some neighbors are most vulnerable. Vulnerabilities affect the development of the CMP (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992).

Vulnerabilities typically are assessed using a combination of likelihood of occurrence and severity of damage. Crisis managers start by listing all possible crises that could affect their organizations. The list of potential crises can result from brainstorming by the crisis management team or an assessment done by a consultant (Barton, 2001). Once a final list of potential crises is developed, each crisis should be assessed. A common approach is to rate each crisis from 1 to 10 for likelihood and impact (with 10 being the strongest score; Fink, 1986). Here is a quick review of the criteria we developed when evaluating crisis threats in Chapter 4. *Likelihood* represents the odds that the crisis might happen. *Impact* is the amount of damage a crisis can inflict on an organization and its stakeholders. The crisis manager then multiplies the likelihood and the two impact ratings to establish a final crisis

vulnerability score. The higher the score, the greater the potential damage (Barton, 2001; Fink, 1986). Crisis managers should focus their attention on crises that have the highest vulnerability scores. Summaries of the crisis assessments are often included in the CMP.

ASSESSING CRISIS TYPES

The list of potential crises for organizations is extremely long. It includes accidents, activist actions, boycotts, earthquakes, explosions, chemical leaks, rumors, deaths, fire, lawsuits, sexual harassment, product harm, strikes, terrorism, and whistle blowing, to name but a few. There is a point to the laundry list of crises—an organization faces different threats, not just one. Different crises can necessitate the use of different crisis team members, emphasize different stakeholders, and warrant different crisis response strategies. For instance, a product harm crisis is not the same as a rumor. A crisis involving product harm requires the organization to respond to those who were hurt, tell consumers how to return the product, and inform shareholders of the financial impact of the recall. A rumor requires a response designed to present the truth to consumers and to stop the source of the rumor.

While crises possess different characteristics, they tend to cluster into identifiable types (Coombs & Holladay, 2001). A variety of crisis typologies can be found in the crisis writings (e.g., Egelhoff & Sen, 1992; Lerbinger, 1997; Marcus & Goodman, 1991; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). These typologies have been synthesized into one master list:

Operational disruptions from disasters: When organizational routines are disrupted by disasters; this includes an organization needing to close or to operate at reduced capacity due to a disaster such as tornadoes, hurricanes, volcanic ash, flooding, or health emergencies.

Workplace violence: When an employee or former employee commits violence against other employees on the organization's grounds

Rumors: When false or misleading information is purposefully circulated about an organization or its products in order to harm the organization

Unexpected loss of key leadership: When an organization suddenly loses a key leader, such as a CEO, to illness or death

Malevolence: When some outside actor or opponent employs extreme tactics to attack the organization, such as product tampering, kidnapping, terrorism, or computer hacking

Challenges: When the organization is confronted by discontented stakeholders with claims that it is operating in an inappropriate manner

Technical-error accidents: When the technology utilized or supplied by the organization fails and causes an industrial accident

Technical-error product harm: When the technology utilized or supplied by the organization fails and results in a defect or potentially harmful product

Human-error accidents: When human error causes an accident

Human-error product harm: When human error results in a defect or potentially harmful product

Organizational misdeeds: When management takes actions it knows may place stakeholders at risk or knowingly violates the law

It would be impossible for an organization to prepare a CMP for every single crisis, but it can prepare CMPs for the major types it may face. Organizations should have crisis portfolios composed of CMPs for the primary types of crises they might face. Because of the similarities of the crises within each type, one CMP can be used to address any crisis within a particular crisis type (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). The crisis portfolio prepares an organization to cope with a wide array of crises.

The organizational vulnerabilities and crisis types can help crisis managers construct their crisis portfolios, addressing the specific crises that could affect the organization. Here is the way to proceed. First, organize the list of potential crises by type. Second, select at least one crisis from each type. Select those with the highest vulnerability rating. The highest-rated crisis in each crisis type becomes part of the crisis portfolio. Third, develop variations of the CMP for each of the crises in the portfolio.

SELECTING AND TRAINING A CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

The crisis management team (CMT) is a cross-functional group of people in the organization who have been designated to handle any crises and is a core element of crisis preparation. Oddly, the American Management Association (2003) found that only 56% of companies with CMPs had a dedicated crisis team. Typically the CMT is responsible for (a) creating the CMP, (b) enacting it, and (c) dealing with any problems not covered in it. The team crafts the CMP after thoroughly researching its organization's vulnerabilities. As just discussed, the CMP planning includes anticipating the most likely crises to befall an organization (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). To develop the crisis plan, the CMT needs information about different crisis types and all information about potential crises (scanning) and actions being taken to prevent crises (prevention). Any background information relevant to crises is helpful when the team is writing the CMP.

A second CMT responsibility is to enact the plan during simulated or real crises. CMPs must be tested to see whether they work by running the entire organization, certain departments, or just the crisis team through drills and simulations. The simulations help the CMT discover any holes in the CMP or weaknesses in the team (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Regester, 1989). The CMT is responsible for implementing the CMP during real

crises as well. We must remember that CMPs are contingency plans. This means that a CMT must be able to adapt to situational experiences and not just mindlessly follow a CMP (Fink, 1986; Littlejohn, 1983).

This brings us to the third major responsibility of the CMT: dealing with factors not covered in the CMP. It is impossible for a CMP to anticipate all possible contingencies in every crisis. During an actual crisis, the CMT must be able to provide counsel on, and resolve issues not dealt with in, the CMP (Barton, 2001; Regester, 1989). It falls to the CMT to make the necessary decisions when a crisis presents an unanticipated challenge. A CMP is an outline, not a road map, for how to manage a crisis. The CMT must fill in the details.

Development of an effective CMT is essential to the crisis management process. The best CMP is worthless if the team cannot fulfill its crisis duties (Wilson & Patterson, 1987). An effective CMT is developed through careful selection and training. Selection involves choosing the people best suited for the tasks, whereas training helps people improve their skills and become more proficient at performing tasks (Goldstein, 1993). Careful selection and training produce more effective workers; that is why organizations spend millions of dollars a year on each.

Functional Areas

CMT selection is not as simple as finding the people best qualified to work on the team. Selection is complicated by the need to have specific functional areas within the organization represented on the CMT. The dominant selection criterion in the crisis management writings is the functional approach. It posits that team members must represent specific functional divisions or positions within the organization, including legal, security, public relations or communications, operations or technical, safety, quality assurance, social media manager, human resources, information technology, finance, government relations, marketing, and the CEO or representative (Barton, 2001; "Creating the Best Crisis Communications Teams," 2003). The logic behind the functional selection is that certain knowledge bases (e.g., operations, legal), skills (e.g., media relations, public relations, social media), and organizational power sources (e.g., CEO) are required on a CMT. For instance, a crisis team often needs to integrate technical information about the organization's operations, assessment of legal concerns, and information collected by security when enacting a crisis plan. Furthermore, media relations skills are needed when addressing the press, social media is critical to crisis monitoring and response, and the CEO or a representative legitimizes the crisis team within the organization and empowers the team to take action. Human resources can address compensation issues for employees during a crisis, and financial can project the costs of the crisis.

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER BOX

Many organizations now have a position titled *social media manager*. Social media managers are charged with overseeing the organization's social media strategy. They should be able to answer the question, "Why are we using social media?" Their job is ensure that social media helps to support the larger organizational strategy. Social media managers monitor, assess, and guide the organization's social media presence (Rouse, 2010). They listen to stakeholders and craft the organizational messages that populate various social media outlets. As part of listening, social media managers identify threats and opportunities emerging in social media (Kruse, 2013). The social media manager is a social media monitor that can provide early warnings of a social media–based threat. A social media crisis communication expert Melissa Agnes (2012) notes, "Early detection is key to fast resolution" (p. 6).

The composition of the CMT should reflect the nature of the crisis (Weddle, 2001). One example would be that a product harm crisis is unlikely to involve information technology, but a computer-hacking crisis would. The core members of the crisis team are typically operations or manufacturing, legal, public relations or communication, social media, security, and CEO or representative. Keep in mind that a CMT may not be the best place for a CEO during a crisis. That is why a representative with authority is recommended. In some cases, the full-time dedicated crisis manager will have executive-level decision-making power. Some organizations like to create a communication core as the starting point for the crisis team. The communication core would be involved in any crisis because communication is always needed. The communication core would include public relations/corporate communication, social media, and legal. Obviously legal is not a typical communication professional, but during a crisis legal frequently needs to approve messages and actions from the crisis team.

Task Analysis

The key to selection and training is the identification of the characteristics (knowledge, skills, and traits) people need to perform their jobs (Goldstein, 1993). *Task analysis* is the technical term for identifying the key characteristics needed for job performance. A task analysis of crisis management should isolate the characteristics required by crisis team members. Once tasks are identified, the knowledge, skills, and traits needed to perform each task should be determined. Through interviews with crisis managers and an analysis of crisis management writings, four specific tasks have been isolated: (1) group decision making, (2) working as a team, (3) enacting the CMP, and (4) listening (Coombs & Chandler, 1996). Table 5.1 summarizes the task analysis.

Table 5.1 Crisis Team Task Analysis

Task Statement	Knowledge	Skills	Traits
Work as a team to facilitate the achievement of crisis team goals.	1. Understand various styles of conflict resolution. 2. Understand components of an ethical conflict resolution.	1. Ability to use cooperation-based conflict management style 2. Ability to apply components of ethical conflict resolution	1. Cooperative predisposition
Apply the crisis management plan (CMP) to crises in order to facilitate an effective organizational response.	1. Understand how to use the CMP. 2. Understand specialized information of one's functional area. 3. Understand mechanisms for coping with stress. 4. Understand mechanisms for coping with ambiguity.	1. Ability to follow directions given in the CMP 2. Ability to supply area-relevant information 3. Ability to use the mechanisms for coping with stress 4. Ability to use the mechanisms for coping with ambiguity	1. Stress tolerance 2. Ambiguity tolerance
Make the necessary group decisions to effectively solve the problems encountered by the crisis team.	1. Understand the critical vigilant decision-making functions. 2. Understand the value of argumentation. 3. Understand how to structure arguments. 4. Understand the value of group participation.	1. Ability to apply the elements of critical vigilant decision making 2. Ability to create arguments 3. Ability to speak in groups	1. Argumentativeness 2. Willingness to speak in groups
Listen to others as a means of collecting information.	1. Understand the steps to effective listening.	1. Ability to use the steps to effective listening	

Very little information exists about the characteristics of crisis team members. The discussions tend to be vague or limited. The personal characteristics mentioned in the literature include being a team player, having decision-making ability and listening skills, and being able to handle stress (Barton, 2001; Dilenschneider & Hyde, 1985; Littlejohn, 1983; T. H. Mitchell, 1986; Regester, 1989; Walsh, 1995). Unfortunately, little detail is provided about what actually constitutes these characteristics—the knowledge and skills needed to meet them. The following sections are dedicated to providing specific information about the tasks, knowledge, skills, and traits that make for an effective crisis team member. The tasks serve as the organizing point for the explanations.

Group Decision Making

Crisis management is a group decision-making process (Fink, 1986; O'Connor, 1985; Olaniran & Williams, 2001; Williams & Olaniran, 1994). Decision making involves selecting an option to meet the needs of the situation or reaching a judgment. The three primary responsibilities of the CMT all involve decision making. As previously mentioned, the team decides what goes into the CMP (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Wilson & Patterson, 1987), when and how to enact it (Mitroff, Harrington, & Gai, 1996; Walsh, 1995), and how to extemporaneously handle those factors not covered in the plan. If crisis management is decision making, the knowledge, skills, and traits associated with group decision making should be essential to the effective performance of a crisis team.

Determining how to handle a crisis is an example of dynamic decision making and is characterized by time pressure, risk, and a changing situation. Researchers find that decision making in a crisis follows one of three styles: intuitive, rule based, or analytical.

The intuitive method is derived from naturalistic decision making, how people use experience to make real-world decisions. Recognition-primed decision making is a form of intuitive decision making that has been applied to crisis management. The decision makers use their experience to recognize cues in crisis situations and to react. This is more than so-called gut instinct. The decision makers use their experience to gauge the situation and evaluate whether their past experiences are appropriate. The advantage of intuitive decision making is its speed and the limited negative effects of stress (Flin, 2006). It's safe to say that intuitive decision making seeks a viable solution rather than the most optimal one.

Rule-based decision making involves finding a rule that can be applied to events in the crisis. There is an assumption that a set of rules does exist. Government reporting requirements and actions are examples of existing rules that crisis managers can use. For instance, the government has a checklist for executing a product recall. However, most crisis situations cannot be managed with a list of rules. There simply are not enough to address all the possible factors a crisis team might encounter. Rules are useful for novices, but there is always the risk of applying the wrong rule. A rules approach would work well for deciding when to enact the CMP, however.

Analytical decision making is the type most commonly used in training. Decision makers are taught a process for making decisions. The focus is on identifying and evaluating options. Analytical decision making is thoughtful and requires time, and some feel it is ill suited to crisis decisions (Flin, 2006). However, the analytical approach is perfect for creating a CMP and has its place in crisis decisions, especially the decision about whether or when to enact the CMP. A well-trained crisis team can use processes like vigilance in a short period of time. The following discussion of vigilance is an analytical approach to decision making. An extended discussion of vigilance is offered because it is such a valuable tool for the crisis team.

Group decision-making research has consistently found vigilance to be valuable in

making effective decisions and avoiding ineffective decisions (Hirokawa, 1985, 1988; Hirokawa & Rost, 1992). Vigilance is a form of critical thinking. Critical thinking can be defined as the "disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action" (Paul & Nosich, n.d., para. 5). Critical thinking involves learning and applying skills used to evaluate information. Vigilance applies critical thinking to group decision making by emphasizing the need for careful and thorough analysis of all information related to a decision (Hirokawa & Rost, 1992; Olaniran & Williams, 2001; Williams & Olaniran, 1994). Analysis is a process of dissecting a whole into its parts in order to examine something in more detail.

Hirokawa and Rost (1992) identified a specific set of four critical vigilant functions that aid the decision-making process: (1) conducting problem analysis, (2) evaluating alternative choices, (3) understanding the important positive aspects of an alternative choice, and (4) understanding the important negative aspects of an alternative choice. Each of these skills is a corrective for a factor that could contribute to faulty decision making. A decision is threatened when a group fails to a see a problematic situation or fails to identify its correct cause. The group must analyze and assess the problem thoroughly and systematically. The group must understand what it is supposed to accomplish.

A decision is also threatened if the group improperly evaluates the alternative choices for solving a problem. Three critical vigilant decision-making functions address the evaluation of alternative choices. The group identifies appropriate standards for evaluating alternative choices, and discusses and specifies criteria for evaluating the alternative choices. Then the group applies the criteria to consider the important positive aspects of each alternative choice, identifying and seeking clarification of these positive aspects. Finally, the group applies the criteria to understanding the important negative aspects of each alternative choice, identifying and seeking clarification of the negative aspects. Research in laboratories and in the field has found these three critical vigilance decision-making functions to be related to higher-quality decisions in groups (Hirokawa & Rost, 1992).

Vigilance is a composite of a variety of knowledge (K), skills (S), and traits (T). First, group members must know some process for evaluating situations (K) and be able to apply these processes (S) to their situations. Second, group members must know how to develop the criteria to evaluate decision alternatives (K) and be able apply these criteria (S). Third, group members must be able to argue for thoroughness of analysis and to present their views on the matters being discussed (S). Arguing, in this context, refers to giving reasons for and against a proposal, not fighting or having an emotional disagreement (Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2009). Group members must be motivated to use their skills if analysis is to be thorough (Hirokawa & Rost, 1992). This requires groups to continually argue for thoroughness. Group members must be willing to argue their positions (T), since group decisions become less effective when members do not voice concerns and allow one

perspective to dominate the group's discussion (Hirokawa, 1985, 1988; Rancer, Baukus, & Infante, 1985). Group members are required to have the skills for argumentation and the disposition to argue (the argumentativeness trait).

Communication apprehension is the fear or anxiety some people feel in a communication setting. A team member with a high level of communication anxiety in a group setting is unlikely to fully contribute (Richmond & McCroskey, 1997) and will likely be silent and let others do the talking. As a result, communication apprehension can cause the team to lose the valuable knowledge that that team member was to bring to the team.

Working as a Team

Members of the crisis team must be able to work together as a group. They must be able to function in a cooperative manner in order to maximize the gains for themselves and others (Daniels, Spiker, & Papa 1997; Paton & Flin, 1999). Some people are naturally cooperative, while others are competitive (R. A. Baron, 1983). Part of working together is resolving the conflicts that inevitably occur within groups (Kreps, 1990; O'Connor, 1985). Conflict happens when people are interdependent with one another but have different goals, which may prevent team members from reaching their goals (L. L. Putnam & Poole, 1987). People in groups often disagree and can blame one another for the disagreements, but conflict can be beneficial to a group. Vigilance is fostered through conflict, including by arguing different perspectives. However, it is important to remember that cooperation is the key to conflict becoming productive rather than destructive (Kreps, 1990).

People seem to have preferred conflict styles, the typical modes they use to handle disputes (L. L. Putnam & Poole, 1987). There are systems for identifying conflict styles (Daniels et al., 1997; Kilmann & Thomas, 1975), and the key is to emphasize the use of cooperation-based conflict styles in crisis team deliberations.

Enacting the Crisis Management Plan

The crisis team must be able to enact the CMP. For this reason, groups train by reviewing and practicing the CMP. Creating the CMP should give the team members greater understanding of the plan (Barton, 2001; Wilson & Patterson, 1987). This is where each team member's functional organizational area becomes important. One reason to appoint a team member is his or her particular knowledge of a functional area that is important during a crisis (e.g., legal, media relations, investor relations). The knowledge and skills of these functional areas are important to executing the crisis plan effectively. Stress enters the crisis management equation most fully during the execution of the plan (Dilenschneider & Hyde, 1985; Shrivastava & Mitroff, 1987). When the crisis team faces deadline pressures and needs to deal with ambiguous information, the stress it experiences increases (O'Connor, 1985). Part of enacting the CMP is managing the concomitant stress

and ambiguous information. Stress can hinder job performance (Baron, 1983), and ambiguity can create stress (Tsui, 1993).

Listening

Crisis team members frequently use the skill of listening. Collecting information when creating or enacting the CMP often means that team members must listen to others. Working together to make decisions requires listening to the others in the group. Obviously, listening is an important part of many tasks. However, many crisis managers feel that listening is important enough to be considered as a separate, distinct task.

Implications for Crisis Team Selection

As crisis expert Andy Podolak (n.d.) notes, "every crisis management program begins with a competent crisis management team" (para. 1). As mentioned earlier, team members must bring certain area-specific knowledge and skills to the crisis team, which will facilitate the execution of the crisis plan—the functional approach to selecting team members. However, as Shrivastava and Mitroff (1987) note, crisis team members also should have a set of general crisis management skills. The knowledge, skills, and traits in Table 5.1 represent a set of such general skills that are vital to the effective operation of a crisis team. The full range of knowledge, skills, and traits should be considered when identifying those people most likely to contribute positively to a crisis team. Assessment is vital in the screening of crisis team candidates. An organization may be in a position to choose among a number of people to represent a functional area. For instance, there might be a pool of five people from operations who possess the requisite skills and knowledge from their area. Only one person from operations is needed, and the organization wants the person best suited for work on a crisis team. The assessment instrument would indicate which of these potential candidates best matches the demands of being a crisis team member, particularly in terms of traits, because people can learn to cope with the limits of their traits but not to develop completely new ones.

It is possible to develop profiles of desirable and undesirable crisis team members from the traits shown in Table 5.1. A desirable member would be low in communication apprehension in groups, high in cooperation, high in ambiguity tolerance, moderate in argumentativeness, and well equipped to handle stress. The desirable profile would show that the crisis team member can work under stress, is not bothered by the ambiguity of a crisis, will work with the team to find the best solution, is willing to express opinions and ideas, and is willing to argue the merits and weaknesses of various solutions. An undesirable profile would describe a person high in communication apprehension in groups, high in competitiveness, low in ambiguity tolerance, high in verbal aggressiveness, and poorly equipped to handle stress. The undesirable team member functions poorly under stress,

feels increased stress in ambiguous situations, works poorly in problem solving by fighting, and may be unwilling to contribute ideas and opinions. Combining the functional and task-based approaches results in being able to select the most competent crisis management team.

Applications for Training

Crisis experts frequently mention the need to train crisis teams (e.g., Augustine, 1995; Mitroff et al., 1996; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Walsh, 1995; Williams & Olaniran, 1994). In any job, a person must possess the necessary knowledge and skills to perform effectively. Current training practices include a group review of the CMP and crisis drill (Wilsenbilt, 1989). Box 5.1, which is derived from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) recommendations for training, describes the basic forms of crisis exercises. The types of training are presented in a progression from simplest to most complex. Each requires additional preparation and places greater demands on the crisis team. Natural disasters, workplace violence, and accidents are the most likely crises for which a full-scale exercise is required. The other crises typically do not require going into the field and using equipment; thus, a functional exercise would be the most complex training. A crisis team needs to work its way up to functional and full-scale exercises through the orientation seminars, drills, and tabletops.

BOX 5.1 TRAINING OPTIONS FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Orientation Seminar: An overview of the crisis management process. The crisis team reviews roles, procedures, policies, and equipment.

Drill: A supervised exercise that tests one crisis management function, such as employee notification or evacuation.

Tabletop: A guided analysis of a crisis situation. A facilitator leads the team through a discussion of what they would do in a particular crisis situation. This exercise does not have the time pressures of a real crisis.

Functional Exercise: A simulated interactive exercise. This can be done in a large meeting room. It tests the complete crisis management system and unfolds in real time to create crisis pressures. The team will need to interact and coordinate with the groups it would encounter in a crisis, such as first responders. The team should conduct one functional exercise a year.

Full-Scale Exercise: The simulation of a real crisis as closely as possible. People are on site and in the field. The actual equipment and people that would be used in a

situation are deployed. There will be simulated injuries as well. Full-scale exercises are time-consuming and expensive, so they should be done only every few years.

Discussions of crisis team training are dominated by proponents of practice based on running simulations of crises (Augustine, 1995; Birch, 1994; T. H. Mitchell, 1986; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Regester, 1989; Walsh, 1995). There is sound logic to this application; simulations enable the CMT to determine how well it can enact the CMP and how the plan might be improved. Part of group training is determining whether the team can accomplish group tasks (Goldstein, 1993). Crisis simulations emphasize group tasks, with their focus on enacting the CMP. Decision making is a critical group-level task that demands training attention. While managers know how to make decisions, the decision-making dynamic changes in a team, especially one that must make time-pressured decisions based on limited information. Training can improve the decision making of teams and of crisis teams.

One promising training tool is called thinkLet. It is a set of facilitation techniques that can aid decision making during a crisis. Some techniques are as basic as brainstorming options and using a straw poll to have group members evaluate options against a single criterion. The thinkLet idea is derived from group support systems (GSS) from information sciences. GSS is the use of software designed to make teams more effective. GSS can be used to focus and structure team deliberations while reducing cognitive costs to access information and minimizing distractions. A thinkLet aids collaboration among team members. Each thinkLet helps to promote one of five patterns of collaboration that are found to facilitate group decisions: diverge, converge, organize, build consensus, and evaluate. Diverge, for instance, helps the team move from having a few concepts to a larger number of concepts. Brainstorming is one of the diverge thinkLets (Briggs, de Vreede, & Nunamaler, 2003). Work on collaborative teams and crisis teams has shown that thinkLet can facilitate and improve team decisions (Kolfschoten & Appelman, 2006; Kolfschoten, Briggs, de Vreede, Jacobs, & Appelman, 2006).

While useful, the group-level approach to training overlooks the need to train individuals in skills needed to complete CMT tasks. People need individual knowledge and skills to function as effective team members (Paton & Flin, 1999; Stohl & Coombs, 1988). Williams and Olaniran (1994) note that crisis team members must be trained in specific crisis duties, which include the individual-level knowledge and skills needed to be effective team members.

Individual-level assessment would be composed of the knowledge, skills, and traits listed in Table 5.1. The type of assessment of each team member indicates specific areas in which that person is strong or weak and identifies a person's specific training needs. Training should be specific; people should be trained only in those areas in which they are deficient. A crisis team assessment system not only determines a person's strengths and weaknesses

but also evaluates a person's progress in acquiring knowledge and skills (Goldstein, 1993). The initial assessment is the benchmark or baseline against which subsequent assessments are compared. Specific training modules should be developed for each of the major knowledge and skills important to a crisis team. When needed, modules designed to help people cope with the limits of specific traits could be added, such as a module designed to develop listening skills.

A 2006 study found that 80% of crisis managers learned how to function in this role on the job. That means only 20% had any training in crisis management ("New Survey Finds Crisis Training," 2006). A study of the Fortune 1,000 found that less than one-third of organizations with CMPs ever tested them (Levick, 2005). A study by the American Management Association (2003) found that only 50% of U.S. companies with CMPs have engaged in any type of crisis training in the past year. More recently, a study by IR Insight (2012) and Keyhaven found that globally only 40% of organizations used crisis training. The percentage was higher in Asia (50%) and lower in North America (35%). There was also large difference in training between mega-capital organizations (a value over $250 billion) and small-capital organizations ($250 million to 1 billion). The crisis training was 61% in mega-capital organizations while only 30% in small-capital organizations (IR Insight, 2012).

This suggests that even many organizations that have CMPs and CMTs are not truly prepared to face a crisis. How can an organization know whether its team members can perform or whether the CMP will work if the team has not trained using some form of crisis exercise? A crisis exercise seeks to simulate a crisis for educational purposes. Team members should know that the purpose is learning, not being critiqued, when they engage in exercises. It is important to create an atmosphere that is supportive rather than punitive in order to maximize the educational benefits of the crisis exercise.

It bears repeating: CMTs need training. Effective training requires the inclusion of both individual-level and group-level knowledge and skills. Crisis exercises are excellent ways to test group-level knowledge and skills. However, part of evaluating the crisis exercise should be dedicated to examining individual-level skills, a point that is missing in most current discussions of crisis team training. Remember, if a team does not exercise, an organization does not really have a dependable CMT or CMP. As Jeremiah Owyang (2011) of the social media consulting firm Altimeter notes, "Building a crisis plan is not sufficient without proper training—companies must practice" (p. 22).

Technology is another reason to hold regular training for crisis teams. New technology is constantly being integrated into crisis management. This includes software to help manage crises and the utilization of social media in monitoring for and responding to crises. If people are not comfortable with technology, they will not use that technology when under stress. Crises create stress, hence, crisis teams that are not comfortable with the new technologies designed to help them respond to crises will ignore those technologies during a crisis. As Owyang (2011) observes, "Those who manage or deploy social media programs

require a constant refresh to their skills, as the landscape changes rapidly" (p. 10). As noted throughout this book, social media increasingly is being integrated into crisis management and crisis communication.

Improvisation's Relationship to Crisis Team Training

There is a growing call in crisis teams to recognize the value of improvisation and less emphasis on following the plans. As we shall see in Chapter 6, crisis management is not about following specific steps in a plan as some critics claim (e.g., Gilpin & Murphy, 2008). Crisis management plans are rough guides that are reference tools when teams make decisions. Most of what a crisis team encounters is not covered in the crisis management plan, that is why this chapter has stressed the importance of decision making. Improvisation is another skill that is valuable to and should be developed among crisis team members. In organizations, improvisation is when deliberate but unplanned actions are executed to aid the organization in responding to some opportunity or threat (Mendonca, Pina e Cunha, Kaivo-oja, & Ruff, 2004).

Researchers have observed that crisis teams use improvisation much like theater groups and jazz musicians. Crises each develop in a unique environment and crisis plans recognize this fact by not being detailed guides to action. What crisis team members need is training that emphasizes the general approach to crisis management—skills that can be employed in any crisis. That is why I have emphasized the general skills needed by crisis teams. However, using improvisation does not mean there is no guiding strategy (Mendonca et al., 2004) or no need for training (e.g., Vera & Crossan, 2005). Crisis teams must learn the general skills to be able to improvise just as jazz musicians must have certain musical skills to improvise. Crossan (1998) recommends that crisis team improvisation is enhanced by fostering teamwork and developing individual skills, points covered earlier in this chapter. Part of crisis team improvisation includes creating and following a strategy, which is why the need for being strategic permeates this book. Having a strategy facilitates legitimate improvisation, which serves to help the organization reach its objectives (Bigley & Roberts, 2001).

Karl Weick (2001) has written some influential works about crisis management. He refers to improvisation as "just-in-time strategy":

> Just-in-time strategies are distinguished by less investment in front-end loading (try to anticipate everything that will happen or that you will need) and more investment in general knowledge, a large skill repertoire, the ability to do a quick study, trust in intuitions, and sophistication in cutting losses. (p. 352)

Weick's quotation captures the relationship between training, crisis management plans, and improvisation. As Chapter 6 explains, crisis management plans are vague and do not try to anticipate every possible event in a crisis. Such a crisis plan would be impossible to create and nearly impossible to use. Training helps crisis team members to be able to think fast and provides reasons to guide their improvisations. The quick responses are not really

instinct or gut feelings but rapid decisions informed by experience and knowledge. Crossan (1998) argues that people overestimate the spontaneous nature of improvisation, causing them to overlook the training behind effective improvisation. Training is vital to creating an improvisation capacity in a crisis team.

Special Considerations

CMTs have two special considerations they may need to address: coordination with external agencies and the need for a virtual team. An organization may find that its crisis is part of a larger disaster, a large-scale event that may require government intervention and involve multiple organizations and agencies. Crises are smaller in scope and may involve just one organization. Disasters include acts of God and acts by humans, such as terrorism and major hazardous material releases. Hurricane Katrina taught organizations not to count on government agencies coming in to help them. However, CMTs may need to coordinate their efforts with firefighters, police, emergency medical teams, or the Red Cross. In disasters, agencies are supposed to follow the incident command system, more specifically, the national incident command system (NIMS; see Box 5.2). CMTs should consult the FEMA website, which contains the complete NIMS training module. While FEMA may be unreliable during some disasters, it offers very good online training. By being familiar with NIMS, CMT members will understand the basic language and chain of command needed to function within the NIMS environment.

BOX 5.2 NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS)

NIMS was developed by the Department of Homeland Security to allow for easier integration of agencies (public and private) that respond to disasters. The system provides a common set of incident command procedures, multi-agency coordination, standardized command and management structures, mutual aid, and public information procedures. The idea is that responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines can work together more effectively to respond to disasters, both natural and terrorist initiated. Government responders from federal, state, local, and tribal jurisdictions are required to take NIMS training, which is standardized as well. Nongovernment responders, such as corporations, are encouraged to understand NIMS. This is part of a larger effort to maximize the use of private resources during a disaster. NIMS did not seem to perform well during hurricane Katrina, but it had not been in place for very long. Knowledge of the structure and terminology of NIMS would help crisis teams during disasters, as they would fall under the purview of NIMS at that point.

The second special consideration is the possibility of virtual teams. A virtual team does not meet in a designated crisis control center. Instead, members are assigned tasks, share information, and make decisions via the Internet and telephone with no face-to-face communication. The team uses mediated communication instead. Most virtual teams are really partially distributed teams (PDTs), which involve a mix of people, some in a shared location and some in remote locations. Some team members would be in the same room or area of the field and able to interact face to face, while others would be in one or more different geographic locations and linked via mediated communication (Hiltz, 2006). Team members on the scene of a crisis have the ability to interact with team members in various geographic locations. A PDT may be needed if an organization has lost all possible crisis control center locations or needs to assemble a team that is geographically dispersed and travel time would be prohibitive for managing the crisis. Also, PDT members can begin managing a crisis as soon as they have been contacted. Any team member can begin to execute individual tasks as soon as she or he is notified. If a team has to wait until members arrive at the crisis command center to begin discussions, the team is losing time. In contrast, a PDT can be having team discussions as the members are traveling to their respective locations. However, a PDT increases the risk of problems for the team because any communication technology failure could doom the team. Still, it is worth considering the option of training for virtual teams or PDTs ("The Well-Provisioned War Room," 2005).

SELECTING AND TRAINING A SPOKESPERSON

The spokesperson is the voice of the organization during the crisis. As such, the spokesperson is a very important and specialized function within the crisis management team. A poorly trained or unskilled spokesperson merely exacerbates the crisis situation (Donath, 1984; T. H. Mitchell, 1986). Again, selection and training require the identification of tasks and the knowledge, skills, and traits associated with those tasks. The discussion of the spokesperson begins with an analysis of the spokesperson's role and responsibilities during a crisis, which provide a foundation for locating the requisite knowledge, skills, and traits.

The Spokesperson's Role

The primary responsibility of the spokesperson is to manage the accuracy and consistency of the messages coming from the organization (Carney & Jorden, 1993; Seitel, 1983). Message management is not an easy task and usually involves more than one person. Every organization should have multiple spokespersons. While this may seem to contradict the view that the organization speaks with one voice, really it does not. First, one person cannot be relied upon to be available all of the time. An individual might be on vacation

thousands of miles away during a crisis and unable to reach the crisis control center in time. What if the crisis drags on for days, requiring round-the-clock efforts from the CMT? No one person can perform effectively for 24 to 48 hours straight. Eventually, lack of sleep will take its toll on job performance. Therefore, each organization should a have pool of spokespersons, all selected and trained in advance of a crisis.

Second, it is an overstatement to equate the idea of one voice with one person. The concept of an organization speaking with one voice merely implies that the organization presents a consistent message. Working together, multiple spokespersons can share one voice. However, the teamwork so vital to the CMT becomes a premium here. The media want to question authoritative sources during a crisis. No one person in an organization is an authority on every subject. As a result, an organization may have a number of people available during one press conference. Each question is then answered by the person most qualified to address it (Lerbinger, 1997). The key is preparation of all spokespersons, including the sharing of all relevant information and the coordination of the questions and spokespersons.

Clearly, the spokesperson must be able to work with the media by listening and responding to questions. Listening is essential because spokespersons cannot give appropriate answers to questions if they do not hear the question correctly (C. J. Stewart & Cash, 1997). Answering questions demands the ability to think quickly. Press conferences are not slow-moving events. The spokesperson must be able to answer questions rapidly. Compounding all of this is the fact that the spokesperson is doing the job in a time of high stress—the organization is in crisis and the media want answers immediately. A spokesperson must be able to handle stress well and not let it interfere with handling media inquiries. The spokesperson is a member of the crisis team, so all the knowledge, skills, and traits in Table 5.1 still apply. However, the big difference between spokespersons and other crisis team members stems from the need to work with the media.

Crisis experts continually recommend that the spokesperson have media training, which usually means practicing responding to media questions: The spokesperson goes through rehearsals (Nicholas, 1995; Sonnenfeld, 1994). Furthermore, there is a variety of laundry lists for what spokespersons should and should not do (e.g., Katz, 1987; Lukaszewski, 1987; Pines, 1985). A sample list of spokesperson do's and don'ts includes being truthful, never saying "no comment," being concise and clear, never losing one's temper or arguing with journalists, correcting errors or misinformation in questions that are asked, looking pleasant on camera, and appearing in control and concerned. While such lists are helpful, they fail to provide a systematic means of either selecting or training spokespersons.

I have helped organizations train spokespersons and determine who should and should not speak to the media. Trust me, not everyone can be an effective spokesperson.

Media-Specific Tasks of the Spokesperson

From watching television, we all recognize that some people are well suited to media appearances and others are not. Some people look good on television, and others look like criminals (Nicholas, 1995). One task of the spokesperson is to be appealing to the viewers, but this does not mean that the person must be physically attractive. Rather, he or she must present material in an attractive fashion. Media training is often vague in explaining how to do this. Similar to the section on CMTs, Table 5.2 summarizes the primary tasks of spokespersons along with the salient knowledge, skills, and traits necessary to perform the pertinent tasks.

Table 5.2 Spokesperson Media Task Analysis

Task Statement	Knowledge	Skills	Traits
Appear pleasant on camera	1. Understand the value of proper delivery.	1. Strong delivery	1. Low communication apprehension
Answer questions effectively	1. Understand the danger of long pauses. 2. Understand the steps to effective listening. 3. Appreciate the danger of "no comment" statements. 4. Understand the danger of arguing with reporters.	1. Ability to think quickly 2. Ability to use the steps to effective listening 3. Ability to use phrases other then "no comment" when an answer is not currently known 4. Ability to stay calm under pressure	1. High stress tolerance 2. Low verbal aggressiveness
Present crisis information clearly	1. Appreciate the problems with jargon. 2. Understand the need to structure responses.	1. Ability to avoid the use of jargon 2. Ability to organize responses	
Handle difficult questions	1. Understand the characteristics of tough questions.	1. Ability to identify tough questions 2. Ability to ask for questions to be reworded 3. Ability to preface tough questions in a tactful manner 4. Ability to challenge incorrect information in a question 5. Ability to explain why a question cannot be answered 6. Ability to evaluate the appropriateness of multiple-choice responses in a question 7. Ability to respond to questions with multiple parts	1. Low argumentativeness

A mix of content and delivery concerns confronts any spokespersons giving public presentations. Content concerns emphasize the information being presented. Spokespersons must disseminate accurate information about the crisis situation (T. H. Mitchell, 1986; Trahan, 1993). Spokespersons must also have command over the crisis-related information if they are to convey this information to the media and other stakeholders. However, poor delivery skills can prevent a message from being received accurately (Holladay & Coombs, 1994; McCroskey, 1997). Spokespersons must be skilled at presenting messages to the target stakeholders, in this case the media. Each of the four spokesperson tasks will now be explained, along with an analysis of the task's connection to content and delivery.

Appearing Pleasant on Camera

The importance of appearing pleasant on camera does not stem from a superficial observation that the spokesperson should look good. Instead, being pleasant on camera reflects a set of delivery skills that helps the spokesperson achieve a number of important crisis objectives. Previously it was noted that the crisis management team must show concern and control during a crisis. Part of the perception of concern and control is developed through the way a spokesperson presents the crisis-related information. One way to better understand delivery is to consider it as part of communicator style, the way a person communicates; it reflects the way something is communicated (Norton, 1983). Communicator style also influences how the content of the message is interpreted by providing a frame for how people should view the content of a message (Holladay & Coombs, 1994).

Spokespersons should maximize the style elements that cultivate the perceptions of control and compassion. Compassion is developed through the attentive and friendly style elements. Attentive styles reflect empathy and listening. Being friendly suggests that a person is confirming and giving positive recognition to others (Norton, 1983). The attentive and friendly style elements help to cultivate the perception that the spokesperson is compassionate because compassionate people are empathetic and confirming. The dominant style elements mean a person is behaving in a confident and businesslike manner (Norton, 1983). The dominant style facilitates the perception that the spokesperson is in control of the situation.

Maximizing these three style elements requires attention to specific delivery factors. Spokespersons must learn to maintain consistent eye contact with the audience (looking at the audience or camera at least 60% of the time), use hand gestures to emphasize points, vary their voices to avoid a monotone delivery, be sure to change facial expressions to avoid being blank-faced, and avoid too many verbal disfluencies, such as *uh, er,* and *um*. Spokespersons should be trained to maximize these five delivery variables when they present material to the media and other stakeholders. Research indicates that these variables promote the perception of dominance, attentiveness, and friendliness as well as increase credibility (Burgoon, Birk, & Pfau, 1990; Holladay & Coombs, 1994). It is logical to conclude that spokespersons will be perceived more positively by stakeholders when maximizing these five delivery factors.

There is a flipside to delivery as well. Poor delivery leads to negative perceptions of the spokesperson. Poor delivery skills are often interpreted as signs of deception (de Turck & Miller, 1985; Feeley & de Turck, 1995). People doubt the believability of a message when these delivery factors are present: (a) weak eye contact, looking at people infrequently; (b) frequent disfluencies; (c) the use of abnormal hand or arm movements associated with fidgeting; and (d) overuse of hand gestures (de Turck & Miller, 1985; Feeley & de Turck, 1995). These are among the clues people look for when trying to detect deception.

Although delivery has always been an important part of the presentation of a public

message (Heinberg, 1963; McCroskey, 1997), content can never be forgotten because good delivery does not make up for lack of content. Good delivery enhances the reception of a message; poor delivery detracts from it. Spokespersons should be trained to maximize the delivery factors that promote control and compassion while minimizing those that contribute to perceptions of deception. All of the delivery factors mentioned thus far can be taught. However, it helps if people do not exhibit the communication apprehension trait when speaking in public. While communication apprehension can be overcome, spokespersons who are not communication apprehensive start out at a higher delivery proficiency level. Media training for spokespersons should include efforts to make them aware of their delivery habits and to polish their delivery skills. Having trainees watch videos of their press conferences is an excellent method for improving delivery skills.

Answering Questions Effectively

Answering questions effectively means providing responses to the questions that are asked. Preparation is essential to effective answers. Spokespersons must know or be able to quickly retrieve the crisis information that has been collected to that point. Another part is listening to hear the question. Spokespersons should not answer the questions they wanted to be asked; they must hear and respond to the very questions asked by reporters. Remember, spokespersons can give introductory remarks or a short briefing before fielding questions. They can use that time to deliver the core crisis message from the organization.

Sometimes the spokesperson does not know the answer. The correct response is to admit what you do not know but promise to deliver the information as soon as you get it (C. J. Stewart & Cash, 1997). Remember the rule to never say "no comment." That phrase triggers two negative events. First, 65% of stakeholders who hear or see "no comment" equate it with an admission of guilt ("In a Crisis," 1993). As David Pendery, senior manager of public relations for Quiznos, says, "Anytime you decline to comment on a known crisis you'll appear naïve at best, incompetent at worst" (quoted in Hall, 2006, para. 3). Second, "no comment" is a form of silence, which is a very passive response. As Richard Levick (2005), of Levick Strategic Communications, notes, "There are two sides to every story, and when you say 'no comment' the media gets the entire story and you don't get your side of the story" (para. 14). In a crisis, being passive means that other actors in the crisis event get to speak and to interpret the crisis for your stakeholders (Hearit, 1994). The organization is allowing others who may be ill informed, be misinformed, or hold a grudge against the organization to define the crisis for stakeholders. An interpretation based on the wrong information or information supplied by an enemy can only hurt an organization's reputation.

A spokesperson also must be cordial and not argue with reporters (Mackinnon, 1996; Nicholas, 1995). Being cordial brings us back to the personality traits of a good crisis team member. A spokesperson should not be high in verbal aggressiveness or argumentativeness. Either trait can lead to a dispute with reporters. This does not mean that a spokesperson lets incorrect statements stand. Instead, she or he corrects any errors or misinformation

before answering a question but should not debate the error or misinformation (Mackinnon, 1996). Handling stress is a part of answering questions, too. An inability to handle stress reduces a spokesperson's ability to answer questions effectively because too much stress erodes task performance in general. Stress is high during media encounters due to the time pressure, the need to answer multiple questions from a variety of reporters (Balik, 1995), and the awareness of the huge number of possible hearers or readers. Participation in a mock crisis press conference is the best way to get a feel for the challenges a spokesperson faces.

Presenting Crisis Information Clearly

Presenting information clearly focuses on the content of the response. As such, it is related to answering questions effectively but has a narrower focus: ensuring that the stakeholders are able to understand what is said. The spokesperson's answers must be clear and concise. *Clear* means the answer is free of organizational jargon and overly technical terms and details (Mackinnon, 1996). Jargon is meaningless to those outside of the circle using it (Nicholas, 1995); as a result, it only clouds an answer. Overly technical information produces the same hazy reception of the message. In addition, "technobabble" makes people think the organization is using jargon to avoid telling the truth. It is best to use only the necessary technical information and explain it in such a way that nontechnical people can understand it. PepsiCo's handling of its 1993 syringe scare exemplifies how to translate technical information. In June 1993, reports began to surface that syringes were being found in cans of Diet Pepsi. PepsiCo chose to focus on how it would be virtually impossible for a syringe to get into the can during bottling. The company reduced its bottling process to easily understandable terms for the news media and its consumers. PepsiCo believed and later proved the syringe scare was a hoax (Magiera, 1993; Mohr, 1994; Weinstein, 1993; Zinn & Regan, 1993). Clarity is aided by careful organization of a response (C. J. Stewart & Cash, 1997). An organized answer is easier to understand than a rambling one. Box 5.3 provides a short case of an organization that had difficultly presenting information clearly.

BOX 5.3 MERCK'S TECHNICAL RESPONSE

VIOXX is an anti-inflammatory drug used to treat arthritis and acute pain. On September 30, 2004, Merck, the maker of VIOXX, recalled the product from the market. Merck made the voluntary recall when one of its clinical studies showed a connection between VIOXX and cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks and strokes. A clinical study uses careful control and treatment conditions to prove a cause-and-effect relationship between two things. This particular clinical study was designed to test the ability of VIOXX to help treat colorectal adenomas. In this case, VIOXX seemed to cause cardiovascular events.

Shortly after the recall, many in the medical community claimed Merck had known of the potential connection between VIOXX and cardiovascular events for years. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Mukherjee, Nissen, & Topol, 2001) indicated that there was a connection. Now consumers had to wonder, "Should Merck have recalled VIOXX sooner?" Merck's answer was "no." The company explained that the published study was based on a meta-analysis, which looks at a variety of studies for trends. Meta-analyses do not have the strict control and treatment conditions found in a clinical study. From a research methods perspective, other factors could have been responsible for the link between VIOXX and cardiovascular events found in the study published by the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Merck said it acted when it had clear cause–effect proof from a clinical study. Much of the research methods jargon and details had been trimmed from this description, but even this reduced version was highly technical. Probably few of Merck's consumers had the depth of knowledge needed to appreciate its argument.

Handling Difficult Questions

During a press conference, not all questions are of equal caliber. Watching any press conference on television makes apparent the frequent exceedingly long and complicated questions, questions that are multiple questions (asking for several pieces of information), tricky or tough questions, questions that are based on erroneous information, and multiple-choice questions with unacceptable choice options. These five examples, each of which has identifiable features, represent the difficult questions faced by a spokesperson. The spokesperson must learn to recognize difficult questions and to respond appropriately. Recognition involves practicing listening to questions delivered in the press conference format.

Recognition is easier than providing responses to tough questions. Still, there are response strategies for each of the five tough questions. For long, complicated questions, ask for the question to be repeated, rephrased, or explained. These strategies give the media representative a chance to improve the question's wording and clarity while providing the spokesperson with more time to construct a response. Multiple questions in one question can be handled in one of two ways. First, the spokesperson can choose which part of the question to respond to, selecting the part of the question that fits best with providing the organization's desired message. Second, the spokesperson can address all parts of the question. When responding to all or multiple parts of a question, the spokesperson should number each part and the answer to each part. The additional structure helps to clarify the answer for other audience members.

Questions that are tricky or tough need a tactful preface to the answer. The spokesperson must convey to the audience that the question is tough or tricky and that a longer-than-usual answer is needed to address the question. It may also be the case that the question

cannot be answered, and the spokesperson must explain why (C. J. Stewart & Cash, 1997). A question based on erroneous information must be challenged and corrected (Nicholas, 1995). The spokesperson must make sure that misinformation is removed from the crisis information being presented at the press conference. For multiple-choice questions, the spokesperson must determine whether the response options are fair (C. J. Stewart & Cash, 1997). Why should a spokesperson choose a response when the two options might have the organization categorized as being heartless or stupid? The spokesperson should explain that the options are unreasonable or inappropriate and develop an option that fits with the appropriate answer to the question. Training helps a spokesperson identify and develop effective responses to difficult questions.

CRISIS APPLICATION: POSSIBLE CRISES

One way to begin applying many of the concepts in this book is to use them to examine how two different types of organizations might prepare for crisis. Either as a group or individually, list the possible crises that could hit your organization if you worked for a large vacation resort. Now create a possible crisis list that might apply if you worked for a company that manufactured pharmaceuticals. Consider the wide range of personnel, geographic, and operations risks. Your lists will probably be longer than you first thought they would be.

Spokespersons in a Digital World

Social media has added a new wrinkle for the spokesperson: starring in your own videos. There seem to be plenty of corporate leaders appearing in YouTube videos to offer apologies to their stakeholders. Here are six examples: (1) Domino's CEO Patrick Doyle for the product-tampering video, (2) JetBlue CEO David Neeleman for trapping passengers in planes for up to 14 hours, (3) KFC President Roger Eaton for the Oprah grilled-chicken giveaway fiasco, (4) Mattel CEO Bob Eckert for three toy recalls in 4 weeks, (5) Maple Leaf Foods President/CEO Michael McCain for a Listeria outbreak, and (6) United Airlines CEO Jim Goodwin for stranding passengers. The need to appear pleasant on camera is magnified in social media. Stakeholders can replay the corporate message and post their comments and critiques. While Patrick Doyle and Domino's were praised for his YouTube apology, many of the YouTube comments were not favorable. Here is a sampling of the critiques:

- He isn't looking at the camera because he might burst into a laughter. I'm sure he doesn't believe his own words. As we speak, we don't know how many other sandwiches are in the process of being molested.

- Cmon the least the CEO can do is look at the camera direct and be more presentable (open collard shirt?). Where is the PR at? You guys are not on your job.
- Why Read Teleprompter SPEAK FROM THE HEART!
- Urgency with sincerity is key, not disingenuous crisis mode by reading teleprompters then publishing written statements . . . "we have no evidence the food was served . . . ."
- Should have looked into the camera or hired a proper teleprompter.

Even though a corporate video is a controlled medium, the delivery advice for spokespersons still is critically important. No corporate response video should go out if it does not appear genuine and sincere. Again, eye contact and other delivery factors that combat perceptions of deception are the keys. As any media trainer will tell you, not all managers are meant to be in video, and effective videos take practice and, when it is your video, multiple takes.

CONCLUSION

The preparation phase of crisis management anticipates the occurrence of crises. The organization musters the resources necessary to effectively manage the crises that may befall it. Diagnosing vulnerabilities assesses the likelihood and impact of potential organizational crises, and crisis types are groupings of similar crises. An organization cannot prepare for all crises but can prepare for the major crisis types. The diagnosis of vulnerabilities and the information about crisis types are used to construct the crisis portfolio, the individual crisis plans for each of the major crisis types.

The crisis team is responsible for managing the actual crisis. Therefore, it is essential to carefully select and fully train each crisis team member. The spokesperson is a specialized role within the crisis management process and provides a vital link to stakeholders. Spokespersons also must be carefully selected and thoroughly trained. Failure to select and train crisis team members and spokespersons methodically is a recipe for disastrous crisis management. In addition, a crisis team is lost without a crisis management plan. Chapter 6 concludes our discussion of crisis preparation by focusing on the plan and the crisis control center.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: PROMOTE RESILIENCE

Crisis leaders need to set a resiliency tone for the organization. When an organization faces a serious crisis, one that could destroy the organization, there is fear of the crisis creating a downward spiral. Crisis leaders need to emphasize not only that the organization will recover but that it will thrive. Working toward a positive outcome during a crisis is a type of resilience. Critical components of

resilience include learning new skills, being able to handle a variety of situations, and improving competencies (James & Wooten, 2010). This chapter's discussion of crisis team training reflects the need to promote resilience. Crisis team training is resilience training. Training allows team members to learn new skills, to be ready for a variety of situations, and to improve competencies. Training also should promote creativity as teams are challenged to develop new and useful ideas when confronting simulated crises.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What other types of crises would you add to the list presented in this chapter?
2. In June 2005, a 4-year-old boy died after riding Mission Space at Epcot Center in Disney World. Who at Disney would the news media want at a press conference? Would the CEO be a good choice? Why or why not?
3. What barriers are there to getting an accurate diagnosis of an organization's vulnerabilities? What can be done to overcome those barriers?
4. As a group, select a particular company and create a potential list of vulnerabilities it might face. Then try to assign values to each of those threats.
5. Do you agree or disagree that the delivery factors are useful in creating effective online videos during a crisis?
6. What would your strengths and weaknesses be as a crisis team member?
7. What would your strengths and weaknesses be as a crisis spokesperson?
8. What types of training do you think would be most useful for crisis teams? Why?
9. What is the relationship between improvisation and training?

CHAPTER 6

Crisis Preparation: Part II

If an organization has done any crisis preparation, it is usually the drafting of the crisis management plan (CMP). While important, a CMP is not a magic insurance policy that protects an organization from a crisis. Nor is it a step-by-step set of instructions for what to do when a crisis hits. Laboring under either of these two assumptions will result in a rude awakening when a crisis does hit. An organization with a CMP it has never tested is no better off than an organization with no CMP. Both will stumble and lose precious time as the crisis management clock starts to tick. This chapter examines functional CMPs and the related crisis communication system that is necessary to navigate the waves of a crisis.

DEVELOPING A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The core sermon preached by crisis converts is the need for a detailed, usable CMP. It must contain the information needed to manage a crisis but should not be overly long and cumbersome. Long CMPs look nice on shelves as they collect dust but are not practical when a crisis hits (Barton, 2001; Coombs, 2006a).

Value

The discussion of CMPs raises a fundamental question: Should we plan for crises? Creating a CMP presupposes there is value in a planning prior to crisis. According to planning theory, planning helps an organization adapt to its environment and improves the possibility of reaching desired outcomes (Chwolka & Raith, 2012). Typically, organizations perform better when managers plan before acting. However, there are limits to plans. If plans become inflexible and force managers to follow a prescribed set of actions, planning can be negative for an organization (Mintzberg, 1994). Planning should be viewed as a process that facilitates strategic thinking and ensures the right people are involved with a project (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008). Crisis experts who take a complexity view of crises have similar reservations about CMPs. The argument is that overly prescriptive CMPs are harmful but planning is necessary to help prepare the crisis team for a crisis (Gilpin & Murphy, 2008, 2010). So the answer to our question is yes, research does find value in planning for crises, but we need to be careful about how we structure and use a CMP.

Smart crisis managers know a CMP does not tell them exactly what to do to handle a crisis. Crises create uncertainty, and no CMP could anticipate all the subtle twists and turns in a crisis. The value of the CMP is as a reference tool. Crisis management is the art of emergent strategy. The crisis team must react to the crisis events; the strategy emerges from understanding the nature of the crisis situation. The CMP provides advice and reminders that can help the crisis team in its efforts. A CMP is a written aspect of the crisis planning process. Crisis teams are best served by thinking about planning (the verb) rather than having a plan (the noun). As we will discuss later, just having a CMP can be liability to an organization.

But what practical value comes from a CMP? As mentioned previously, crises are time-pressured events during which quick responses are essential. During a crisis, time should not be wasted finding needed background information, deciding who will do what, and trying to determine the sequence of events (Barton, 2001). A CMP helps to reduce response time by gathering these elements together beforehand. In addition to speed, the CMP helps create an organized and efficient response. With some framework in place, the chaos surrounding a crisis is reduced and the event is less stressful (Corporate Leadership Council, 2003). A CMP creates a system that can save lives, reduce an organization's exposure to risks, and permit remedial actions without embarrassment and scrutiny (Barton, 1995).

Many large organizations have recognized the need for CMPs (Barton, 2001; Lerbinger, 1997). Still, in 2005 only 60% of major companies had them, up from 53% in 1984 (American Management Association, 2003). That number had risen to 69% by 2012 (IR Insight, 2012). The numbers indicate that the message is still not being heard by all organizations. Sometimes it takes a crisis to reinforce the need for a CMP. The phrase *better late than never* comes to mind. In reality, all organizations should have CMPs because all organizations are at risk of a crisis, no matter how careful they are about their policies and operations.

Components

For CMPs, bigger is not always better. A CMP must be manageable, not filling a large binder and difficult to use. The most desirable CMP is a short document that is user-friendly. CMPs can be placed in an easy-to-use flipchart format, bound at the top, and with each section having a different tab for easy identification. Additional options include keeping copies of the CMP on CDs, flash drives, or secure intranet sites. Whatever the format, the CMP should be considered flexible and usable (Coombs, 2006a).

The CMP is, at its roots, a communication document and involves identifying who to contact and how. Contact information is provided for team members and additional experts that might be useful to the team. In fact, some crisis experts refer to the CMP as the *crisis communication plan* (e.g., Fearn-Banks, 2001). A crisis communication plan is a major

part of the larger CMP and covers such information as how to reach various stakeholders and the creation of precrisis messages. A CMP also includes methods and means for documenting what is said and done during a crisis. It can include reminders, in checklist form, of key actions that typically are taken during a crisis. This discussion of the CMP includes what might be covered separately in a crisis communication plan. However, it is important not to rely on a checklist for a rigid set of actions that must be taken. Each crisis is unique, and the CMP is a reference tool, not a step-by-step formula.

A CMP has three basic components: (1) documentation, (2) contact information, and (3) reminders. Table 6.1 lists the common components found in a CMP. Notice the components do not include step-by-step directions for handling the crisis. The documentation covers preparation and the crisis response. Documentation for the preparation includes an acknowledgment and a rehearsal date. The acknowledgment is an indicator from the employees that they have read the CMP and understand their responsibilities during a crisis. For hard copies of a CMP, this form is a removable page that employees sign and return to human resources, where it is placed in their personnel files. It is a signed affidavit saying that each employee has read and understands the CMP. For electronic versions, the email containing the digital version of the CMP includes a statement that by opening the document the employees are acknowledging they understand and accept their crisis responsibilities. By having either the signed documents or digital verification in their personnel files, employees are encouraged to take the CMP very seriously (Barton, 2001).

Table 6.1 Common Elements in a Crisis Management Plan

1. Confidentiality Statement
2. Rehearsal Dates
3. Introduction
4. Acknowledgment
5. CMT Contact List
6. Incident Report Form
7. CMT Communication Strategy Worksheet
8. Stakeholder Contact Worksheet
9. Secondary Contact List
10. Centralize External Communication
11. Proprietary Information
12. Technical Jargon Warning
13. Crisis Control Center Designation

The crisis response documentation includes the incident report form, CMT

communication strategy worksheet, and stakeholder contact worksheet. Crisis teams must keep accurate records of what has been done during a crisis. Crisis teams need this information when evaluating their crisis management efforts, and the organization needs this information when handling lawsuits or government investigations triggered by the crisis. The incident report form records when the incident was first apparent, where the crisis occurred, when various people and organizations were contacted about the crisis, and what actions were taken to address the crisis by whom and with what result. The CMT communication strategy worksheet reminds the crisis team that crisis communication is strategic—it serves a distinct purpose. This worksheet reminds CMT members what it means to be strategic and to document crisis actions. Crisis managers are prompted to consider who they are talking to (the exact stakeholder), to record the specific audience, to record the specific goal, to consider what they are trying to achieve with this communication goal, to identify the tactics to be employed, and to attach a copy of the actual message that was sent to the audience (Barton, 2001). Crisis managers begin by developing the objectives for the messages they create, the strategy the crisis team is pursing, before jumping to the use of tactics. Strategy, not tactics or technology, should drive the crisis communication response.

The stakeholder contact worksheet covers what to do with the various stakeholders that contact the organization during the crisis. Foremost among those are usually the media, but others may request information and need a response during a crisis. The stakeholder contact worksheet section should begin with the specific procedures that should be used when a call, email, or social media post is received (Barton, 2001). The procedures should specify where all contact attempts should be routed and who will answer them. The focus typically is on identifying a spokesperson to respond to the media, a topic discussed in Chapter 5. However, the organization should not overlook other stakeholders who may be seeking information, such as community leaders, employees, employees' families, investors, and important bloggers. These stakeholders will probably use some digital channel, such as social media, to contact the organization. Although a lower priority than the media during a crisis, these other stakeholders have legitimate information needs. Neglecting them injures the organization-stakeholder relationship. Organizations must develop procedures for all stakeholders who might contact the organization, not just the media. In addition to having clear procedures, careful documentation is essential. To record this information, multiple copies of a Stakeholder Contact Worksheet should be included in the CMP. The worksheet should include who contacted the organization, when the contact was made, the channel used to make contact, the specific inquiry, the response, the follow-up that was promised, and details of that follow-up (Barton, 2001).

Contact information covers the people that can help a crisis team collect information and to make decisions during the crisis. The starting point is the CMT contact list that supplies the names and contact information of all the members of the team, their areas of expertise, any outside consultants that may be needed, and any outside agents that may need to be contacted, such as insurance or emergency personnel. The CMT contact list

indicates whom to contact, tells why they are relevant to a crisis, and provides a variety of means for contacting each person. The list should indicate how the person on the list can help the organization. The list should indicate the person's expertise and list what types of crises best fit that person's expertise. This document is sometimes called the crisis directory. It provides an easy-to-use system for identifying and reaching members of the crisis team.

Crisis teams need to be ready to handle unusual circumstances that arise during a crisis. The CMT contact list includes a variety of stakeholders who might need to be informed about the crisis. The secondary contact list identifies the stakeholders to be contacted and who in the organization is responsible for communicating with them. Stakeholder type, contact name(s), organizational affiliation (if applicable), title, contact information, and documentation (when contact was made and by whom) should be included on the sheet (Barton, 2001). The social media manager and public relations director will be very valuable when constructing the secondary contact list.

The reminders involve the sensitive nature of the CMP and proprietary information in the organization. It is very easy to share digital copies of the CMP, but most corporations treat CMPs as confidential. Each CMP has a cover page that reminds crisis team members that the CMP is confidential and should not be shared with anyone else. The proprietary information section is a reminder that full disclosure is not always advisable during a crisis. While crisis managers often preach full disclosure of information, there are some policies and factual information that organizations should not reveal. The proprietary information section reminds crisis team members that certain information is confidential and cannot be released to stakeholders without CEO authorization or review by legal counsel (Tyler, 1997). For example, an organization should never give away trade secrets that provide its competitive edge in the marketplace without an extremely compelling reason (Barton, 2001). On a related note, an organization should never release the names of victims until family members have been notified.

Organizations can add one additional set of reminders: technical jargon warning. As noted in Chapter 5, technical jargon can reduce the effectiveness of crisis communication. Each industry and organization has its own technical jargon. The crisis team should create a list of common technical jargon terms they might use and how best to explain those terms to people outside of their industry or organization. A sample technical term reminder section might describe the difference between *venting* and *releasing*. Each organization should develop its own set of jargon terms and explanations.

It is helpful to have an introduction page for the CMP. The introduction should be written by the CEO or some other recognized leader within the organization. The message reinforces the importance of crisis management, the value of the CMP, and the seriousness of being a crisis team member. The introduction is a reminder to employees of the seriousness and importance of crisis management. The crisis control center designation indicates where CMT members should go when the CMP is activated along with alternative sites if the primary location cannot be used. Some organizations have developed

special crisis control centers, sometimes called *crisis command centers,* while others just have a designated assembly point. Team members know to go directly to the specified location when they are contacted. As we will discuss later, the increased use of mobile technology is changing the nature of crisis control centers.

The final reminder concerns the need to centralize external communication during a crisis. This section is a reminder that public relations, marketing, and advertising messages should be consistent with the crisis effort. This part of the CMP lists all the major external communication channels being used by the organization, including social media efforts, and who in the organization is responsible for each channel. In some major crises, organizations may suspend all external communication messages except for those coming from the crisis team. Or the organization might suspend certain messages during the crisis. For instance, Carnival Cruise Lines was criticized for promoting special offers on its Facebook page during the Carnival Triumph crisis. External messages should support the crisis effort and not appear to be inappropriate during a time of crisis.

As the Carnival Triumph example indicates, social media channels need to be integrated with crisis communication efforts. Having the social media manager on the crisis teams helps to promote integration and avoid the problem of who controls social media during a crisis (Chand, 2013). As Stephen Waddington from the consulting firm Ketchum notes,

> Social media cannot be treated within isolation in a crisis and an integrated response is required across all forms of media. An issue that breaks on a social form of media such as a blog or Twitter can quickly shift and be amplified by more traditional forms of media. Oversight of the entire media landscape is critical for listening, planning and response. (quoted in Chand, 2013, para. 6)

When integrating social media, we return to the term *dashboard* from Chapter 4. In addition to monitoring social media, dashboards can be used to manage various social media channels. For instance, instead of managing four different social media channels from four portals, you can manage all four from one location—the dashboard. Moreover, there is a critical need to monitor social media for how people are reacting to the crisis and your crisis management effort. The social media dashboards help crisis teams monitor and respond to the crisis, two critical functions during a crisis. Crisis teams need to remember to centralize external communication during a crisis.

There is nothing magical about these 13 CMP components. An effective CMP may not use all of them or may add a few more. The 13 components are simply the most common elements found in CMPs. Organizations might create abbreviated versions of the CMP that an employee could carry in a pocket or even as a wallet card that crisis team members are required to keep with them at all times. Another option is to store digital copies on the smartphones of team members. To build in redundancy, teams might be required to have both digital and hard copies of the CMP. Whatever option is used, it is vital to keep the CMP lean and easy to reference. Clearly, teams will benefit from having more information than what is in the CMP. Box 6.1 provides an outline of a crisis management plan developed by Continental Airlines. The more detailed information a crisis team might need

is stored and organized in the Crisis Appendix.

BOX 6.1 OUTLINE OF A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR CONTINENTAL AIRLINES

1. Introduction: CEO's statement about the importance of the plan. "Failure to comprehend this plan will result in chaos that will be detrimental to the company as a whole" (Gaines, 2010, p. 2).
2. Acknowledgments: The section where employees indicate they have read the plan and understand their roles in the plan.
3. Rehearsal Dates: Lists the dates when the plan has been rehearsed. Continental recommends biannual practicing of the plan.
4. Purpose and Objectives

   Purpose: Reviews the purpose of the plan, such as "to respond to crisis quickly and with intention to minimize damage" (Gaines, 2010, p. 5).

   Objectives: Lists the objectives of the plan, including "to communicate accurately and effectively during crisis" (Gaines, 2010, p. 5).

5. Key Publics: Lists the key publics Continental has identified for a crisis.
6. Notifying Publics: This section notes important information must be sent to key publics as soon as possible. Key publics are divided into internal and external publics. Internal publics are to be notified before external publics. Also, more direct and personal channels, such as e-mail, are recommended for internal publics, while external publics can be reached through mass notification channels such as the news media.
7. Crisis Communication Team: A list of the crisis team members and their contact information is provided. The list is divided into corporate officers, board of directors, and public relations.
8. Media Spokesperson: The CEO is identified as the primary spokesperson to be supported by the executive vice president of marketing and public relations and the executive vice president of operations. Spokespersons are advised to "utilize concise language, pleasant demeanor and an appearance that is rational, concerned and empathetic" (Gaines, 2010, p. 10).
9. Emergency Personnel and Local Officials: Provides a list of emergency personnel that should be contacted during a crisis. This includes federal officials who should be notified when there is a crash.
10. Key Media: Provides a list of key media contacts for a crisis.
11. Spokespersons for Related Organizations: Provides a list of the names and

contact information for spokespeople at other airlines.

12. Crisis Communication Control Center: The headquarters in Houston is presented as the location for the crisis control center. Alternative locations are also identified.
13. Equipment and Supplies: Provides a list of materials the crisis team should have. The list is divided into pregathered materials and those materials brought by the crisis team.
14. Pregathered Information: This is a summary of the information that was pregathered and stored as reference material for the crisis team. Such information includes FAA inspection citations for the last 5 years, safety procedures, case studies from past plane crash crises including photos, and product manufacturing procedures.
15. Web page: The webmaster is to be notified so that the company web page can be updated quickly.
16. Websites and Related Links: List of relevant websites the crisis team may need, including those of the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board.
17. Key Messages: The crisis team is reminded that there are key messages they must convey during a crisis. "Key messages must be short and concise and repeated frequently throughout press briefings and Q&A sessions" (Gaines, 2010, p. 17). This section provides some examples of key messages, including those related to bolstering, compensation, corrective action, and mortification.
18. Trick Questions: Identifies questions that can create problems and distract from the key messages. An example would be "So profit is more important to you than your customer's safety?" (Gaines, 2010, p. 18).
19. Sample Press Briefing: Provides sample text for a press briefing.
20. Prodromes: Provides a list of preventative actions for possible crises. These are actions that should be taken regularly to prevent crises.
21. Evaluation Form: This is designed to collect feedback about the crisis communication training guide. There are nine question using both a Likert scale response format and space for written comments. Here is one of the items: "I understand key messages and believe I am capable of delivering one if necessary" (Gaines, 2010, p. 21).

Crisis Appendix

Even the collection of 13 elements just discussed can become lengthy. As a result, you may wish to create a Crisis Appendix to supplement the core CMP. The appendix reflects a

knowledge management aspect of crisis management. A Crisis Appendix is a crisis knowledge database that can contain precollected information, templates, press kit, and past crisis knowledge. For instance, a Crisis Appendix is an excellent place to store extended lists of potential experts and the documentation you will need for recording the team's actions.

The Crisis Appendix can contain the supplemental or background information you might need to know in a crisis, placed in an easily accessible format. An effective way to organize this information is to think of the questions you are likely to be asked in a crisis. What is your organization's safety record? When was your last product recall? How often is maintenance performed on the equipment in question? You can store answers and information related to these and other questions. Your precollected information will reflect your organization's crisis risks. That means you should precollect information related to the crises most likely to affect your organization.

Templates are prewritten statements that require only a few blanks to be filled in before they are released. A number of different news releases, Twitter messages, Facebook posts, and blog posts can be drafted ahead of time and approved by the legal department. The CMT simply fills in the details from the current crisis, such as date, location, number of injuries, amount of damage, and so on. Time is saved, as the core message is written and approved before the crisis. An organization should also store what it has learned from past crises and exercises. Chapter 9 elaborates on organizational memory and learning. The idea is that the organization uses past experience to guide current actions by repeating previous successes and avoiding past mistakes. Knowledge from past crises or exercises may be useful to current crisis management efforts, so it should be available to the CMT.

The templates should take advantage of the interactive nature of the Internet. Many companies now talk about social media releases, which attempt to maximize the interactivity offered by the Internet. The utilization of interactivity, such as web links, should be used for any social media templates such as Tweets, Facebook posts, and blog posts. Toward that end, templates should include an RSS link and a share link. *RSS* stands for *really simple syndication.* It is a web feed that allows others to follow and publish your content. A share link allows people to click on an icon, then select the social media they would like to use to share the information with others. For instance, if I want to share information that has a share link icon, I can connect it to my Twitter account. A message then appears as a tweet with a web link to the information and some space for me to add my own comments. RSS and share links allow stakeholders to expand the reach of the crisis message by sending it to other stakeholders.

A press kit is a set collection of information about the organization. It includes backgrounders (historical information about the organization), fact sheets about the organization (including products and services), digital images, video files, and biographies of top management. Press kits are commonly used public relations documents that are easy to add to the Crisis Appendix. The press kit provides background information that media

personnel can use when crafting their crisis stories. As with the CMP, the press kit must be updated periodically to reflect changes in the organization.

It is not uncommon for CMPs to have crisis risk assessments and postcrisis evaluation forms. The crisis risk assessment identifies possible crises and evaluates the risk of each in terms of likelihood and impact. (Likelihood is the probability of the crisis occurring, while impact is the amount of damage [financial, structural, environmental, reputational, or human] the crisis could inflict on the organization.) The assessment overviews the variety of crises an organization may most likely face, but it is not an exhaustive analysis of all possibilities. (Crisis assessment was detailed in Chapter 5.) Because crisis risk assessment is useful prior to a crisis, it can be placed in the Crisis Appendix rather than the CMP.

Once a crisis is over, the CMT must assess its efforts. (As Chapter 9 will detail, an organization must learn from its crises.) Since the crisis management effort is primarily an exercise in communication—information collection and dissemination—the evaluation form focuses on communication (Barton, 2001; Egelhoff & Sen, 1992; Fearn-Banks, 2001). The evaluation form will include sections on the notification system used by the CMT and its information collection efforts. The information collected through the form will help the CMT correct weaknesses and maintain the strengths of the CMP. Because this assessment is a postcrisis activity, it can be placed in the Crisis Appendix rather than the CMP.

UNIVERSITY APPLICATION: PREPARATION

Do you know what to do if the building you are in right now were to catch on fire? Of course you get out of the building, but where should you assemble? Is there a procedure for checking in or out once you evacuate? If you do not know this information, see if you can find it. A good place to start would be your university's website. What other emergency situations should you be prepared for on campus, and how has your university prepared you for them?

The CMP Is Not Enough

The danger of a CMP is that it can provide managers with a false sense of security. Some managers feel that if they have this plan in place, they are protected when a crisis hits. Three flaws challenge this assumption. First, the CMP is a general guideline for action; it represents contingencies. Crisis teams must adapt the plan to match a specific crisis. Mindlessly following a CMP in lockstep fashion is a recipe for disaster (Fink, 1986; Littlejohn, 1983). The team is invaluable in adapting the CMP to contingencies and handling those factors never addressed in the CMP (Barton, 2001; Regester, 1989).

Second, the CMP is a living document. Organizations change, their operating environments change, and their personnel changes; thus, the plan must be updated regularly. At least once or twice a year, the CMP should be examined for necessary changes. Moreover, a crisis manager should review it weekly to see if updates are necessary.

Third, a CMP has little value if it is not tested and practiced in simulations or exercises. This point cannot be stressed too strongly. Practice reveals the holes or weaknesses that must be addressed before a real crisis occurs (Wilsenbilt, 1989). For example, at an airport in Texas, a serious flaw was discovered during the crisis drill for an airplane crash. Because airport personnel had the wrong radio frequency for contacting emergency personnel in the town, their radios were worthless during the drill. This is a common problem in disaster responses and was one of many problems during hurricane Katrina. Changing the frequencies was a simple procedure, but the problem would not have been discovered in time without the drill. Fortunately, the drill rather than an actual crisis revealed this serious problem in the CMP. Furthermore, practice is the only way for team members to gain experience enacting the plan. Practice also builds team confidence that they can handle a crisis. The dangers of an unrehearsed team have already been addressed. Managers must not let having a CMP lull them into a false sense of security. An ongoing approach to crisis management should prevent this complacency.

Other Related Plans

Organizations should create emergency preparedness and business continuity plans that will interface with the CMP. If a crisis requires an evacuation or providing shelter-in-place, the emergency preparedness plan is in effect as well. How do the two plans coordinate with one another? This is a question that exercises can answer and can help to enable smooth coordination. Of particular concern is overlapping memberships or resource demands of the two plans. The CMP and emergency preparedness plan should complement one another and not compete in any way.

One organizational goal during a crisis is to resume business as usual as soon as possible. The Business Continuity (BC) plan covers efforts to maintain operations. The BC plan outlines efforts that are to be taken either to keep the organization running during the incident or to return to normal operations as soon as possible after the incident. Again, the organization should determine whether overlapping membership or resource demands exist between the BC and the CMP. Also the BC and crisis team should coordinate messages. For instance, if an alternative location is used temporarily to maintain production, workers need to be told where and when to report for work. Suppliers and customers need to know if there will be a disruption in the supply chain, the extent of that disruption, and its estimated time span.

An excellent example of coordinating the CMP and BC was shown in response to the West Pharmaceuticals plant explosion in Kinston, North Carolina. West Pharmaceuticals

told customers the length of time it would take before production in their other facilities would offset the loss of the Kinston facility. Employees were told they would be working at other facilities until the Kinston facility was rebuilt. Employees were instructed where they would go and how they would be rotated home every so many weeks to have time with their families.

Organizations should have a social media policy, which seeks to reduce risks associated with employees using social media. The social media policy provides guidelines for how employees should behave when using various social media. A comprehensive social media policy indicates appropriate and inappropriate behavior across the wide array of social media channels an organization might be using. Typical points from social media polices include clearly identifying yourself as an employee when making comments and including a disclaimer that the views do not represent the organization, obtaining approval before posting on any of the organization's official social media sites, and upholding any applicable laws such as privacy, fair use, and copyright (Black, 2010). Here is a sample statement from Cisco's social media policy:

> When posting your point of view, you should neither claim nor imply you are speaking on Cisco's behalf, unless you are authorized in writing by your manager to do so. If you identify yourself as a Cisco employee on any Internet posting, refer to the work done by Cisco or provide a link on a Cisco website, you are required to include the following disclaimer in a reasonably prominent place: "the views expressed on this post are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of Cisco." Your Internet postings should not include Cisco's logos or trademarks, and should respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure, and other applicable laws. ("Cisco's," 2008, para. 5).

REVIEWING THE CRISIS COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

With the personnel and CMP in place, crisis managers must make sure the physical setup of the communication system is prepared. Elements of the crisis communication system include the mass notification system, the crisis control center, and the intranet and Internet. Preparation entails determining whether the crisis communication system is sufficient to meet the needs of the CMT and to verify that the system is operational—that it works.

Mass Notification System

There are times when the crisis team must send a simple message to large a number of people. This is called *mass notification.* Although mass notification typically involves employees, it also can include community members who need to be given safety information about evacuation or shelter-in-place. Mass notification is done through an automated messaging system, which sends a message by phone, text message, e-mail, or a combination of these to a preset list of people. The easiest way to engage in mass notification is to outsource it. A number of vendors, such as Everbridge, provide an array of automated messaging options. The crisis team can use automated messaging systems to

inform employees that a crisis has occurred and warn the community about safety risks. The systems can even be interactive, allowing the people who are notified to respond to the message. The messages need to be short. Employees and community members should be told where to go to find additional information, such as a phone number, a website, or an internal intranet site for employees only. Community members should be informed of any safety risks as soon as possible. Moreover, it is critical that employees learn about the crisis from the organization, not the news media. The mass notification system may be used whenever the crisis management process demands a short message be sent to multiple people.

Social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook are not designed to be used as mass notification systems, though some organizations do use Twitter for mass notification. Social media is best used as a supplemental system for mass notification, not the primary system. Depending entirely on a social media channel is dangerous. What happens to the organization if the social media channels make changes to reduce the effectiveness of mass notification or the social media ceases to exist? Redundancy is a great quality during a crisis. Use your organization's social media channels as redundancy for your mass notification efforts.

Crisis Control Center

The discussion of the Crisis Appendix noted that organizations should have a crisis control center. Such a center serves many functions. It is a place for the CMT to meet and discuss the crisis, an information collection center, and a place for briefing the media. Ideally, the crisis control center is a separate area in the organization devoted solely to crisis management and equipped to meet the needs of the CMT. Large, geographically dispersed organizations should have crisis control centers at all major facilities. Multiple crisis control centers provide two benefits. First, a global company cannot expect to handle all crises effectively from one location. Extreme distances and time zone differences will hamper the crisis management effort. Second, multiple crisis control centers provide natural backups. If a crisis such as a fire or earthquake were to destroy an entire facility, the organization could use one of its other crisis control centers. Large-scale crises, such as hurricane Katrina, reinforce the need to have backups that are geographically distant from the site of the crisis. Some smaller organizations may use public relations agencies to house their crisis responses and use these agencies' facilities for the crisis control center.

To fulfill its various functions, the ideal crisis control center will have a scenario-planning room in which the CMT members can meet, a communication center for monitoring information (TV monitors, phones, computers, multiple computer monitors of social media feeds, and wire service), and a press room for briefings. The crisis control center should be fully equipped and operational at all times. Part of being prepared is having backups for all the necessary equipment. The specific equipment will vary according

to the needs of the specific organization. There must be sufficient equipment and backups for the center. The equipment must be checked regularly to ensure that it is in working order.

The crisis control center should also be stocked with food and drinks because nutrition and hydration support effective decision making. The crisis control center should have administrative support as well to help assist the team with basics tasks, such as making copies or taking inquiries. The crisis control center must have dedicated phones lines, redundant Internet access, wireless connectivity, and the ability to track the news media. It follows that information technology support is essential, too ("The Well-Provisioned War Room," 2005).

Some crisis experts have argued that a crisis control center should be mobile or even virtual. A mobile center can be deployed anywhere. You do not have to worry if your facility is shut down, because the mobile center can be placed in any number of locations. A mobile unit would have the same equipment needs as the stationary crisis control center. The main difference is that there would be no media briefing room due to space limitations at a mobile site. However, media briefings could be handled in a separate mobile facility; rented space, such as a meeting room in a hotel; or outdoor space, weather permitting.

Virtual and partially distributed teams can stay linked through wireless communication and the Internet. Today, technology has become reliable and advanced enough to support distributed teams. This means all members of the crisis team are no longer tied to the physical location—a crisis control center. Some crisis team members will need to monitor news and social media coverage of the crisis, which is best accomplished in a crisis control center. But team decisions can be made through conference calls or online meetings. As noted before, the problem with virtual and partially distributed teams is the potential for equipment to fail. This risk is greatest for virtual teams because all communication is mediated. Partially distributed teams are preferable to virtual teams because you have the option to base your response from the traditional crisis communication center and to use technology to allow some team members to stay involved when they are in the field or cannot get to the crisis control center. Again, you always want a backup plan in a crisis. If the communication technology fails, teams can still assemble at the crisis control center.

UNIVERSITY APPLICATION: CRISIS COMMAND CENTER

Identify a location on campus that would make an excellent crisis command center. What makes that location an excellent choice? Next, create a list of all the equipment you believe should be in the crisis command center. Be sure to consider the need for backup or alternative equipment.

Intranets and Internet

Intranets are custom-made for crises. They are like the Internet but are self-contained within an organization—only organization members have access to the information, and even then, access to sensitive information is limited to those with the proper clearance (Hibbard, 1997). The beauty of an intranet is the speed of accessing information for the CMT and other employees. The CMT can access information directly through a computer instead of through telephone calls. If the crisis team needs financial information, it can retrieve the information on the computer—no need to place a call. Collecting and analyzing information is crucial during a crisis. Crisis teams gather raw data, transform the data into usable information (create knowledge), store the knowledge, and communicate it to others (Egelhoff & Sen, 1992). An intranet is ideal for meeting these needs (National Research Council, 1996; Reeves, 1996). Motorola, for example, uses an intranet as part of its crisis management efforts. It stores crisis-relevant information (e.g., financial and product information) on its intranet and uses the system to facilitate the exchange of information during a crisis.

An intranet allows immediate access to data about the organization; it can store information, provide a site where the crisis situation and relevant information is updated regularly, be accessed by any employee, and allow communication to others in the organization via e-mail. Granted, not all crisis-relevant information can be collected via an intranet. For instance, interviewing witnesses to an accident in a facility must be done in person. However, any precrisis background data needed about the organization, such as product ingredients or safety records, can be located there (e.g., in a Crisis Appendix). Moreover, e-mail and an intranet are not always appropriate means of communicating crisis-related information to employees. Still, employee e-mail can be effective at times, and a regularly updated summary of crisis information allows employees to access what they want when they want it.

As noted previously, the Internet offers multiple channels with different applications for crisis communication. This discussion of the Internet will be divided into two broad categories: (1) websites and e-mail and (2) social media. The separation is based on the primary use of e-mail and the web to present information to stakeholders, while social media is dominated by stakeholders creating the content.

The web allows outside stakeholders to access organizational information. They can make e-mail inquiries or visit a web page to do so. In situations when it is an appropriate channel, e-mail can be used to reach government officials, media representatives, activist groups, and many other stakeholders. The only limit is whether your target stakeholders have e-mail and you have the correct addresses. A web page can contain updated information about the crisis. Again, stakeholders have the option of deciding what information they examine and when they examine it. As mentioned previously, Odwalla was faced with a nationwide recall of 13 juices in 1996. The situation was serious because the E. coli–contaminated juice killed 1 consumer and sickened 66 others. Odwalla

developed a web page when it needed to recall some of its products in 1996. The voluntary recall and consumer communications were launched because of reports that people were becoming ill from E. coli in Odwalla fruit drinks (Thomas, 1999). The web page identified the exact products under recall, how to return these products, and the reasons for the recall —the exact information customers needed to receive. Sample messages included Odwalla's completion of the recall (November 2), an update on the recall (November 1), confirmation that the Food and Drug Administration found E. coli (November 4), and condolences to the Denver family whose child died from E. coli poisoning (November 8). Taylor and Kent (2007) have been strong advocates of integrating websites into crisis communication.

An organization should also create a crisis dark site. A dark site is a section of a website or a completely separate website that has content but no active links. When a crisis hits, the CMT can activate the link, and the dark site becomes accessible. West Pharmaceuticals used part of its website for this purpose when the Kinston facility was destroyed. BP used a separate website to address the deadly 2005 explosion at its facility in Texas City, Texas. A significant amount of information can be placed on a crisis site before a crisis. Such information would include background information on the facility or product, photographs of the facility (for media use), maps of the facility, and links to relevant third-party experts (Corporate Leadership Council, 2003). Specific information about the crisis can be added as it becomes known. Again, templates or holding statements can speed the posting of information. The templates or holding statements are a series of fill-in-the-blank statements for the media. The focus is on basic information: what happened, where it happened, the cause (if known), and next steps to be taken (Business Roundtable, 2002).

Social media crisis consultant Melissa Agnes (2012) has identified three different options when using a dark website: (1) remove the regular organizational website and replace it with a temporary crisis site, (2) link the crisis site to the organizational website, and (3) create a separate URL and site for the dark site. Replacing the organization's website with the crisis dark site shows that the crisis has the organization's full attention. However, reserve this strategy for the really major crises. The replacement option can overdramatize a lesser crisis and interferes with search engine rankings for the website. There is also pressure to end using the dark site as soon as possible in order to bring back the original organizational website. Linking the crisis dark site to the organizational website is a simple and elegant solution; it preserves a website's search engine ranking and allows the organization to keep the site running as long as it needs to do so (Agnes, 2012).

The separate URL website presents the challenge of preselecting the proper domain name. The organization must pick a domain name that will be found when people search for the crisis. It is difficult to anticipate the best domain name for searches. Moreover, most stakeholders will automatically go to the corporate website to find information about the crisis. If there is no crisis information, the stakeholders will wonder why the organization cares so little about the crisis (Agnes, 2012). A separate option is useful in the event that a

crisis extends over a long period of time, such as months or years. Coca-Cola has a separate website to address concerns over its global water use, while Union Carbide developed a separate website for the Bhopal disaster. When the crisis is long term, it is easier to identify the proper search terms. In addition, the organization can maintain the site without having a direct connection to the organization that the link option creates. For most crises, the link option will be the most effective way to present a crisis dark site.

Stakeholders do turn to the web to find information about a crisis. Yet oddly, researchers have found that only about 60% of organizations in crisis use the website (Perry, Taylor, & Doerfel, 2003). Failure to use the website in a crisis will become a greater liability for organizations because stakeholders increasingly use the web as a means to get information quickly. If an organization does not address the crisis online, stakeholders may wonder why. There is a need to tell the organization's side of the story, and the website provides an ideal place to tell that story. Unlike the news media, company websites provide organizations with unlimited space to talk about the crisis. Chapter 8 will return to the need to tell "your side of the story."

Crisis management is moving toward using the web more fully. Major agencies, such as Hill & Knowlton, Ketchum, and Burson-Marsteller, feature the Internet in their discussions of crisis management client services. Their focus is on preparing dark sites for clients and monitoring the Internet for crisis-related information. Integrating the Internet into the crisis management effort is becoming an expectation as the media and other stakeholders increasingly turn to the Internet when seeking crisis information ("Lackluster Online PR No Aid in Crisis Response," 2002). Not having an Internet component to your crisis management effort may be viewed negatively by stakeholders.

Websites also provide access to information outside of the organization. Some forms of external information required during a crisis can be drawn from them. In particular, government agencies provide information on regulations and reporting procedures. Other sources also might be relevant, depending on the type of crisis being experienced. For instance, industry accident data are useful during an organization's own accident crisis. The CMT can also monitor what is being said about the organization and the crisis online, including via traditional as well as social media. As with monitoring traditional media, the CMT needs to know what is being said and what the stakeholders know in order to determine the accuracy of the crisis information being disseminated and whether the organization's crisis message is getting through to stakeholders. The intranet and Internet can be valuable information processing and delivery tools when used properly during a crisis. Remember, the intranet and Internet do not make all other information gathering and dissemination tools and channels obsolete. Always use the channel that is most effective for the communication situation (Clampitt, 1991; Rupp, 1996).

Crisis teams can pre-prepare social media messages as well. The focus lately has been on blogs. C4CS, a strategic crisis communication consulting firm, recommends creating dark sites for blogs, or what they term *stealth blogs*. In other words, messages are written for the

blogs but do not go live until the crisis hits (Wacka, 2005). Shel Holtz (2007), a recognized expert on social media, argues that crises are not the time to start a blog because a new blog has no following and probably will be ignored. We began discussing this point in Chapter 2 but expand on the point here. The counterargument, one that even Holtz notes, is that stakeholders are looking for information, so why not offer a blog? The logic is that if anyone sees the blog, it has contributed to the crisis management effort (Martine, 2007). However, the new blog will not serve as a mechanism for engagement or have that informal, authentic voice that an established corporate blog would have (Holtz, 2007). In fact, one recommendation is that crisis blogs not allow comments (Wacka, 2005). In essence, the blog becomes a website but is another location where stakeholders might find crisis information. So decide for yourself how much a new blog might help during your crisis. This same advice holds for any other social media an organization might use in a crisis. If the organization does not have an established social media presence before the crisis, the social media will add little value to the crisis communication efforts (Agnes, 2012).

During a crisis stakeholders will conduct online searches for information about the crisis. Search engines follow a logic, and altering words in crisis messages can help to achieve search engine optimization (SEO). During preparation, crisis teams should identify the key words that will be searched for in each of the various crises the organization is likely to encounter. Make sure those key words are in your prewritten templates and that the list is available during the crisis for crafting messages. The organization also might consider arranging for paid search contracts to be in place. Both SEO and paid search options will increase the likelihood of stakeholders finding your information when they search online during the crisis (Wehr, 2007). Some search terms that stakeholders use during a crisis are benign and can be embedded in messages appearing online before a crisis. For instance, during product harm, stakeholders might search "safe+[the product name]." Swanson might use the term "Swanson+frozen+dinner+safe" in everyday messages. Then during a crisis, searches again will feature existing messages from the organization. Contracts could also be in place for pay per click. The idea is that when a crisis term is searched, an ad linked to crisis information will appear next to the search results (Oneupweb, 2007).

As noted earlier, organizations are hesitant to discuss crises on their websites. Organizations are even more reluctant to discuss crises in their social media channels. Failure to acknowledge the crisis in social media is shortsighted and potentially harmful. Not using social media during a crisis is shortsighted because an organization loses three potential benefits. First, social media are ideal for the rapid presentation of information. A message can uploaded quickly once a crisis hits, especially if the crisis team had templates. Royal Caribbean, for instance, used Facebook to break and to update information about the fire on the cruise ship Grandeur in 2013.

A common theme in crisis communication, including in this book, is the need for the organization to tell its side of the story during a crisis. Research shows that the traditional

news media often do not report the organization's side of the story (Holladay, 2009). An organization controls its social media messages and can use its entire range of communication channels to tell its side of the story. As noted in the discussion of the CMP, the communication channels need to be integrated. A crisis team cannot convey much information in a 140-character tweet. However, the tweet can include a link to the dark crisis website. The same can be done for Facebook and blog posts. The dark crisis website becomes a hub for the crisis communication channels. It can provide detailed information, photographs, videos, and relevant web links for those wanting more information about the crisis. Crisis managers can craft both a written and visual narrative for how they see the crisis.

Finally, the stakeholders who consume an organization's social media typically are supportive of that organization. Followers on Twitter, those who "like" a Facebook page, and people who read blogs all generally like the organization creating those social media messages (Kent, 2005; Shaw, McCarthy, Dykeman, 2012). Organizations are likely to find support for their crisis management efforts among such a favorable crowd. These stakeholders can support the organization by responding favorably to the crisis communication/management efforts and by relaying the crisis messages to others. By using social media, organizations might generate online support for their crisis communication and management efforts (Coombs & Holladay, 2012b).

STAKEHOLDERS AND PREPARATION

Stakeholders should be part of the prevention thinking and process. If crisis managers expect stakeholders to do some tasks during a crisis, stakeholders need to know what task to do and be confident that they can execute it. Employee and customer stakeholders are considered in most plans. For instance, a resort would have plans for evacuating guests during a fire or a tsunami, and large-scale crisis exercises can include all employees. But the community, those who live close to an organization, should not be ignored. Crisis managers may need to request community stakeholders to take action during a crisis.

The most common tasks required for community stakeholders during a crisis are the emergency measures of evacuation and shelter-in-place. Making sure that stakeholders are aware of what they should do (task knowledge), feel they can do it (self-efficacy), and are given a reason to act (motivation) is a complex challenge. Cultural differences are one of the greatest barriers to task knowledge and self-efficacy. Heath, Lee, and Ni (2009) found that many people did not have task knowledge or self-efficacy for emergency tasks due to cultural issues. The awareness and self-efficacy efforts failed because the messages lacked sources similar to, and message sensitivity to, the target stakeholders. Stakeholders are more likely to be informed and have self-efficacy for emergency information if the message comes from a source similar to themselves and the message is sensitive to cultural factors (Heath et al., 2009). Even when people know what to do and can complete the task, they need the motivation to act. Risk communication can offer insights into how to help stakeholders

develop task knowledge and self-efficacy (e.g., Heath & Palenchar, 2000; Palenchar & Heath, 2007). A more detailed discussion of risk communication is beyond the scope of this book, but crisis managers should know that resources are available if they are faced with these challenging tasks related to preparing stakeholders.

Crisis managers should take special steps for community preparation. First, explain the dangers that different crises pose to the community. Such explanations are actually part of government-mandated risk communication. This helps to motivate stakeholders by establishing the reality of the danger a crisis created. Run checks on your warning system to determine if it has the proper coverage of stakeholders and that the system works properly. Check whether stakeholders understand sample messages you might use in the crisis. This gives crisis managers a chance to clarify unclear messages. Finally, assess whether the community has the ability to respond. For instance, are there some people who lack transportation during and evacuation? The organization might want to consider options for alleviating that problem.

CONCLUSION

The CMP and crisis control center complete the discussion of the six elements of crisis preparation. The CMP should be meticulously crafted before a crisis occurs, and the crisis communication system must be in working order. The CMP prescribes how and when to communicate during a crisis. An excellent CMP and CMT are useless if the physical structure of the communication system is not in proper working order. Calls cannot be made without working phones, and online data cannot be accessed without working computer stations and Internet connectivity. All preparation elements should be reviewed and updated regularly to maintain a state of readiness for crises.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY

To be successful in a crisis, organizations need to have agility. Organizational agility requires an organization to be flexible and have a wide range of knowledge to guide its actions. Crisis leaders can facilitate agility by breaking down boundaries between different departments in an organization (James & Wooten, 2010). Where boundaries are eliminated, a greater variety of knowledge is generated that can be used to create flexibility—people can generate more options for the organization to take. Crisis leaders should ensure that the CMPs capture input from across the organization and promote cooperation during a crisis. For example, centralizing external communication should result in people from different departments working in collaboration to support the crisis messages. Crisis leaders can promote organizational agility by stressing the value of interdepartmental cooperation during

a crisis.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Would you choose to have a virtual crisis team? Why or why not?
2. What are the dangers of becoming overly dependent on the Internet or intranet during a crisis?
3. What crisis communication utility do you see in the various social media channels?
4. How might you change the list of required sections for a crisis management plan?
5. How might the structure of crisis management plans change as they become more digital?
6. Which side of the dark site debate do you support? Why?
7. Why do social media policies matter to crisis managers?
8. How has communication technology changed how crisis teams operate?

CHAPTER 7

Crisis Recognition

An actual crisis puts an organization's crisis preparation to the test. We deceive ourselves into believing that crises are easy to spot. We think all crises are like giant icebergs in the North Atlantic on a clear summer's day, relatively simple to see and to avoid. It is true that crises are easy to locate when there is an obvious trigger event: a train derails, a natural gas pipeline explodes, E. coli is found in a frozen lasagna, an employee is wounded by a coworker, or some other identifiable event. The obvious crises make it easy to realize the need to implement the crisis management plan. However, not all crises are obvious.

As the definition of crisis in Chapter 1 noted, crises are symbolic as well as objective. People can disagree on whether a situation is a crisis. Some crises, particularly those involving conflicts with outside groups, are hard to see. As strange as this may sound, an organization may not even know it is in a crisis (Kamer, 1996). A situation becomes a crisis when key stakeholders agree it is a crisis. Unfortunately, some members of management may wish to deny that the organization is in a crisis even when stakeholders are screaming that it exists (Fink, Beak, & Taddeo, 1971; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Similarly, management may refuse to take preventative actions to address warning signs. The first part of this chapter details how crisis team members might "sell" a crisis to top management in an organization. The recommendations hold true for selling warning signs, too.

To review, the crisis management team (CMT) begins to understand a crisis once they have uncovered it. The CMT engages in knowledge management. The team must collect accurate crisis data quickly (Darling, 1994; T. H. Mitchell, 1986). The crisis team analyzes the information to create the crisis-related knowledge that is used to (a) guide decision making and (b) create the messages sent to various stakeholders (whether internal or external). Without crisis-related knowledge, the team cannot make decisions or take actions to ameliorate the effects of the crisis. Actions include making statements to the media because this stakeholder is the most likely to pressure the organization for crisis information.

Members of the CMT must be aware of the problems associated with information collection, knowledge creation, and knowledge management. The second part of this chapter reviews research concerning the pitfalls associated with information collection, processing, and dissemination, along with ideas for combating these problems.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? RED BULL AND TAMPERING

THREAT

You work in the corporate communication department for Red Bull. The organization is known for its energy drink and sponsorship of extreme sports. But lately the organization has been on edge. A few weeks ago, the organization received a letter stating someone would contaminate Red Bull cans with feces if the company did not pay a certain amount of money. The organization called in the police, who have been investigating the case. After completing the initial investigation, the police have said the organization can go public with the threat.

- What are the advantages of going public with the threat?
- What are the disadvantages of going public with the threat?
- How might today's social media environment influence your decision?

SELLING THE CRISIS

While more the exception than the rule, some crises are not obvious or easily accepted. A problem can be ignored or not deemed worthy of the label *crisis* (Billings, Milburn, & Schaalman, 1980). Whether a problem is defined as a crisis is significant; framing a problem as a crisis changes how the organization responds to it. When a problem becomes defined as a crisis, the organization expends more resources on it and works harder to discover an explanation for it (Dutton, 1986). Part of expending resources includes activation of the crisis management plan (CMP). While some crises may be hard to see, others are simply ignored.

As I've stressed, stakeholder perception matters during a crisis (Augustine, 1995; Frank, 1994; Higbee, 1992). If your customers define a situation as a crisis, it is a crisis, even if the dominant coalition (those managers in the organization who make decisions) chooses to initially define it as a noncrisis. We have to go no further than the Intel Pentium chip flaw fiasco to recognize the wisdom of these words. Intel knew in the summer of 1994 that the chip was flawed; it could make mistakes on certain advanced mathematical calculations. However, Intel ignored customer concerns about the flaw. The company even failed to grasp the significance of having the flaw posted on the Internet. After generating greater customer animosity, Intel eventually agreed that the situation was a crisis, and in December 1994, it replaced the defective chip (Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1996). It may fall to the crisis team to convince the dominant coalition to accept stakeholder perception that a crisis exists. A crisis is taken more seriously and is given more attention than a noncrisis. The issue for crisis managers becomes how to sell a problem as a crisis to the dominant coalition. The same concerns and advice hold true when the crisis manager is trying to convince others in the organization that a crisis threat requires additional attention.

Crisis Framing: A Symbolic Response to Crises

Organizational environments are filled with ambiguous events. Organization members must frequently decide whether something is important or try to determine why something happened (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). Crises are part of the ambiguity encountered by organizations. All problems within organizations are framed in some way. A *frame* is the way a problem is presented, the meaning one attaches to the problem (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). A frame affects interpretations of the problem by highlighting certain of its features while masking other features (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). There can be competing frames. For example, abortion has been framed as both freedom of choice and murder. Crisis managers need to create a frame that will provoke the most desirable response from top management. Three factors play a role in developing an appealing crisis frame: (1) the crisis dimensions, (2) the expertise of the dominant coalition, and (3) the persuasiveness of the presentation.

Crisis Dimensions

Crises vary along three dimensions: (1) perceived salience, (2) immediacy, and (3) uncertainty. Like warning signs, actual crises differ in the amount of loss that can occur and the likelihood of the loss if the CMP is not enacted. Failure to act can allow damage to spread to other areas of an organization, into surrounding communities, and to additional stakeholders. For instance, fire or toxic gas can spread to other parts of a facility or into the community, and shareholders can suffer when financial damage from a product harm crisis is not contained.

Perceived salience is related to the crisis assessment dimensions of impact and likelihood; it varies with the value of the possible loss (impact) and the probability of the loss (likelihood). The greater the possible loss or probability of loss, the greater the perceived salience of a crisis for managers (Billings et al., 1980; Dutton, 1986). For instance, a faulty product that affects a few customers has less perceived importance than a faulty product used by hundreds of thousands of customers, if the potential harms from the defects are equal. Perceived salience is the key to framing warning signs. As has been discussed, crisis managers use likelihood and impact to rate warning signs (see Chapter 3). Similarly, crisis managers need to emphasize the danger of ignoring warnings when presenting them to the dominant coalition.

Risk communication offers unique insights into the perceived salience of a crisis. A critical concern in risk communication is how stakeholders perceived a risk. The mental models approach from Carnegie Mellon University (Morgan, Fischhoff, Bostrom, Lave, & Atman, 1992) sought to discover how ordinary people evaluated risks, then compared that to experts' models, the way scientists evaluate the risk. The gap between the two indicated the information ordinary people might need to help them make decisions about risks (Lundgren & McMakin, 1996). Sandman (1987) emphasizes that risk was a function of

hazard (the danger associated with a risk) but also outrage (how people feel about a risk). The risk communication research highlights that perceptions of risk are subjective and the same risk can mean different things for different people. This is a reminder that stakeholders can vary in how they perceive the salience of a crisis and that their perceptions can be different from those of organizational managers. Consistent with the definition of crisis presented in Chapter 1, managers must consider the crisis perceptions of stakeholders when they assess the perceived salience of a crisis. Crisis managers may have to build the case for crisis based on stakeholder assessments and crisis salience.

Risk communication has identified a number of factors that shape perceptions of risk, including trust, dread, proximity, susceptibility, and control. A risk is stronger and more likely to produce a negative reaction from people when there is a lack of trust in the organization creating the risk, dread is stronger (how scary the risk is), there is greater proximity (how close people are to the risk), there is a stronger sense of susceptibility (personal vulnerability to the risk), and there is control (the person's ability to control exposure to the risk; Covello, Sandman & Slovic, 1988; Palenchar & Heath, 2006, 2007; Witte, Meyer, & Martell, 2001). These same factors should influence how stakeholders perceive crises. Crisis managers can utilize any of these five risk factors when building a case for the perceived salience of a crisis. Again, organizational managers and stakeholders may perceive a crisis differently. The five risk factors can be used to justify why stakeholders view a crisis as salient and why the organization should honor those perceptions—take action on the warning sign.

Immediacy refers to the time pressure involved with the crisis. Time pressure has two components: (1) how quickly the crisis will hit and (2) the degree of stakeholder pressure to take action. The sooner a crisis can produce harm, the greater its immediacy. A tampered product that endangers customers' lives has greater immediacy than an initial complaint about moral violations by an activist group. A tampered product places people in immediate danger, while moral violations tend to involve philosophical debates.

Comparing two cases will clarify the idea of immediacy. Early in 1990, an antiabortion group had urged Dayton Hudson Corporation to end its grant to Planned Parenthood (Kelly, 1990). In September 1990, Dayton withdrew its funding from Planned Parenthood. Dayton wanted to avoid being drawn into the abortion debate. Management felt that providing funding to Planned Parenthood could tie them to abortion. Women's groups were angered by the decision. Dayton officials had time to consider their options and to study consumer attitudes. The grant was eventually restored. The moral debate did not require immediate action. In contrast, Burroughs Wellcome Company experienced extreme immediacy when two people in Washington state died from taking cyanide-laced Sudafed 12-hour capsules in March 1991. Burroughs had to remove the products from the shelves and warn customers quickly (Dagnoli & Colford, 1991; Kiley, 1991). The product safety concern required immediate action.

Intense pressure from key stakeholders is another form of time pressure. When primary

stakeholders (e.g., employees, customers) want action now, the crisis has immediacy. For example, the 1997 UPS drivers' strike gave the crisis immediacy. During the strike, UPS was delivering only 10% of its packages and losing millions of dollars (Sewell, 1997). A company cannot survive under such conditions. Pressure from employees gave the UPS crisis immediacy.

Uncertainty is the amount of ambiguity associated with a problem. The larger the amount of ambiguity surrounding a crisis, the greater its uncertainty. People are drawn to and have a need to reduce uncertainty. Organizations are no different (Dutton, 1986). Organizations need to know what is going on in their operations and why. How can a problem be corrected if it is not understood? Low-uncertainty problems can be explained and corrected using common organizational rules and procedures. High-uncertainty problems demand the type of extra attention crisis management can deliver. A comparison of similar crises helps to illustrate the power of ambiguity.

On December 10, 1995, American Airlines Flight 965 from Miami to Cali, Colombia, crashed into a mountain, killing 160 of the 164 people on board. On July 17, 1996, TWA Flight 800 from New York to Paris exploded 12 miles off the coast of Long Island, killing all 230 people on board. The Searchbank database listed five articles dedicated to Flight 965 and 141 for Flight 800. One reason for the different levels of media interest was the variation in ambiguity.

For Flight 965, investigators quickly identified the automated guidance system as the cause of the crash. The final report, released 7 months later, confirmed that the plane was following the wrong directional beacon, causing the automated guidance system to fly the plane into the side of a mountain (Dornheim, 1996; McGraw, 1996).

The cause of Flight 800's explosion was investigated and debated for over 17 months. Missiles, terrorist bombs, lightning strikes, meteorites, and mechanical failures all surfaced as possible causes (Duffy & Beddingfield, 1996; Gray, 1996). The National Transportation Safety Board's final report ruled out all but mechanical failure. The evidence suggested that a small electrical charge ignited the fumes in an empty fuel tank that then exploded and destroyed the plane. More than 15 years later, the cause of Flight 800's crash is still being debated online. Flight 800 remains a mystery because of the ambiguity surrounding the explosion. The mystery helped to hold media and public attention for over a year. Furthermore, a Herculean effort went into discovering the mysterious cause of the explosion and reducing the ambiguity.

Uncertainty reduction theory (URT), from interpersonal communication, posits that uncertainty creates a need to communicate (seek information). Uncertainty creates anxiety, and the information gathered through communication can relieve the anxiety by reducing the uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). The testing of the of the premise of uncertainty leading to information seeking has had mixed results. Evidence suggests that uncertainty alone is not enough to cause people to seek information. Rather, people also

must be motivated to seek information before uncertainty has an effect (Kellerman & Reynolds, 1990). Just as crises generate the need to create attributions, crises should also provide a motivation for stakeholders to seek information about crises, especially if the crises are salient for them. Ambiguity can demand to be resolved. Organizations must expend extra effort and resources when crisis ambiguity increases. The CMP can focus the attention required by an ambiguous crisis. The easiest crisis to sell is one that is perceived as very important, is very immediate, and has high uncertainty. Crisis managers must maximize as many of the crisis dimensions as possible when they frame the crisis for the dominant coalition.

Expertise of the Dominant Coalition

Organizational politics creeps into crisis management. Part of successful politicking is in knowing the people with whom you are dealing. The management personnel that make up the dominant coalition will possess varying types of expertise, and their expertise affects their comfort zone for dealing with problems. Managers like to successfully solve problems. Not surprisingly, they are more likely to be successful when dealing with problems within their expertise—their comfort zones. Comfort increases because they can identify more easily with the problem. Crisis managers must be sensitive to the expertise of the dominant coalition when framing a crisis. The crisis frame should be adapted to the coalition by reflecting some aspect of their expertise (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). If the dominant coalition has financial expertise, the CMT should make sure the crisis frame includes a financial component. One way to tap expertise is to use jargon, the language of a profession. A message using jargon from the dominant coalition's area of expertise cultivates a sense of familiarity with the situation (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). While not a completely rational reaction, the dominant coalition will want to manage crises they feel they can resolve successfully. A crisis leads stakeholders to question the dominant coalition's competence. Successful crisis management restores the perception of the dominant coalition's competence, while failure further erodes it (Dutton, 1986; Pearson & Clair, 1998). Hence, top management prefers crises it can feel comfortable with. The same holds true for prodromes. Any Dilbert cartoon reminds us that the organizational world does not run on pure logic.

Persuasiveness of the Presentation

Crisis managers have an opportunity to convince the dominant coalition that a problem is a crisis, and they must use their persuasive skills when given this opportunity. People are persuaded by three basic factors: (1) credibility, (2) emotion, and (3) reason (Larson, 1989; Tan, 1985).

Credibility is a concept that is used in persuasion and is defined as the receiver's attitude

toward the communicator. For crisis management, the organization is the communicator and the stakeholders are the receivers. Credibility is a very important concept because it has a significant effect on the persuasiveness of a message (McCroskey, 1997). Research has proven that credibility can be divided into two components: expertise and trustworthiness. *Expertise* is the communicator's knowledge about the subject. An expert organization will appear to be competent, capable, and effective (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). *Trustworthiness* is the communicator's goodwill toward or concern for the receivers. A trustworthy organization is truthful and ethical and considers the impact of its actions on stakeholders when making decisions (Allen & Caillouet, 1994; Kouzes & Posner, 1993). To be credible, crisis managers need to have a record of successful task completion demonstrating their expertise. Having a reputation as being honest enhances their trustworthiness (McCroskey, 1997).

Emotion centers on how the message is presented (McCroskey, 1997). To heighten the emotionality, a crisis should be presented in a dramatic fashion. A crisis is dramatic when it is novel. Vivid examples and stories help to create a dramatic presentation. The drama and emotion make the message easier to understand and more interesting, and they catch the attention of management (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Larson, 1989). Management and other targets of persuasion do not evaluate information on the basis of emotion alone, however; they also rely on logic.

Reason, a rational appeal, stirs the intellect (Larson, 1989). The use of facts (verifiable information) and logical evidence persuades people. However, facts do not simply speak for themselves. Crisis managers can spin the facts by emphasizing the dangers of a situation. Lotteries sell tickets by telling people they cannot win if they do not play, not by reporting the odds against winning. To convince management of a crisis situation, crisis managers would feature information that supports the strong likelihood and impact of a crisis while downplaying information that erodes either. Both sides of the issue must be presented because one-sided arguments are ineffective with educated audiences, such as managers (Tan, 1985). Crisis managers who use emotions to capture the dominant coalition's attention must then use compelling rational evidence (e.g., statistics, expert testimony) to support the acceptance of the crisis (Dutton & Ashford, 1993). The message designed to sell the crisis or warning sign should begin dramatically with vivid stories and examples, then move to reasoned arguments to reinforce its acceptance.

A hypothetical example demonstrates the use of emotion and reason. Imagine you work for Juice-Is-Us, a fresh vegetable juice maker. Evidence suggests that a recent shipment of tomato juice could be tainted with E. coli. You want to have the situation treated as a crisis. One option is to state the statistical probability of E. coli contamination and to note that the effects would be bad for the company. Another option is to describe in detail the effects of E. coli on the human body. Retell an actual case of a person who suffered from it. Vivid examples and a story reinforce the dangers by bringing them to life. Next, present the information by noting the possibility of people contracting the disease, not the probability

that they will not; spin the information. Add the possibility that regulatory agencies and law enforcement officials, such as the FBI, could investigate the situation. Last, reinforce your case with statistics about the likelihood of contamination, the potential number of consumers affected, and the potential financial and reputational impact of any E. coli poisonings or deaths. As you can see, the second option provides a much more persuasive argument for enacting the CMP.

Organizing the Persuasive Effort

Effective persuasion should draw on theory. Theory tells crisis managers what factors to consider when trying to sell a crisis or crisis threat and how to organize their efforts. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a commonly used persuasive theory. It argues that behavior is a function of behavioral intention or the readiness to perform a behavior. Behavioral intention is indicated by normative beliefs, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and control beliefs. Normative belief is the individual's perception of the behavior. Subjective norm is how relevant others feel about the individual's behavior. Perceived behavioral control is how easy or difficult the individual believes the behavior will be. Control beliefs are any factors that the individual perceives can facilitate or impede the performance of the behavior. What we need to do is translate TPB into selling a crisis or threat (Ajzen, 2002).

The individuals are the managers who need to accept that a crisis or threat needs action. The behavior would be the efforts to manage the crisis or threat. Crisis managers can sell the crisis or threat by concentrating on the subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and control beliefs. Stakeholders are relevant to management, thus crisis managers must emphasize how stakeholders would expect the organization to act on the crisis or threat. Perceived behavioral control is the easy part of managing the crisis or threat. Talking about the organization's expertise to handle the crisis or threat, in part by playing to the expertise of the dominant coalition, helps to build favorable perceived behavioral control. Finally, control beliefs are any barriers or resources related to improving the effort to manage a crisis or threat. Crisis managers must identify the resources and ways to overcome any barriers so that control beliefs become positive. This section can only scratch the surface of persuasion, but it does provide guidance to help crisis managers sell a crisis or threat to a reluctant dominant coalition.

Resistance to Crises

Not all problems rise to the level of crisis in an organization. As stated in the opening of the chapter, crises can be contested, symbolic issues. Natural disasters, malevolence, technical and human accidents, organizational misdeeds, and workplace violence tend to be obvious crises about which most stakeholders would agree on the interpretation. Challenges

and rumors are two crisis types about which contrasting interpretations abound. At least one stakeholder group will see a crisis while the organization does not. The different interpretations can cause an organization to overlook a crisis. It is foolish arrogance to believe that only the organization can place the crisis label on a situation. Crisis interpretations are socially co-created by primary stakeholders, secondary stakeholders (especially the news media), and the organization. If primary stakeholders believe a crisis exists, it does. Remember the Audi 5000 case from earlier in the book? Audi never did agree with customers over the sudden acceleration problems with the 5000. The contested crisis generated years of bad press and consumer ill will before Audi recalled the 5000 (Sullivan, 1990; Versical, 1987).

Karl Weick (1979, 1993) is a social psychologist who has studied crises and whose ideas have been applied to crisis management (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003). Weick's (1979) model of information processing provides a theoretical explanation for crises being missed. He uses the term *enactment* to explain how people in organizations make sense of events such as crises. The process begins when there is some change in the organization's environment—an event occurs. Through enactment, managers isolate pieces of information about that event for closer inspection. The managers then try to make sense of and give meaning to this information through the process of *selection.* (In knowledge management, this is when information is converted into knowledge.) Selection guides how the managers respond to the event. Last, *retention* explains what information the managers store for future use. Enactment is the key to the entire model. The information that is chosen for further attention shapes how managers see and react to their environment. If managers enact information that does not indicate a crisis, the organization will not respond to the event as a crisis. Weick's idea of enactment is that managers actively shape and create the environments to which they react by imposing their interpretations on the information. Managers may enact an event very differently from stakeholders and create a conflict over whether a crisis exists.

Crisis managers should evaluate all stakeholder claims that a crisis exists by examining or reexamining the information. First, they must determine whether the facts are correct. Are the claims accurate? Inaccurate claims should be corrected immediately, thereby diffusing the crisis. Second, if true, determine whether other stakeholders accept the interpretation of the situation as a crisis. Will more stakeholders in a particular group or other stakeholder groups support the crisis interpretation? In Audi's case, would more customers as well as government regulators see the sudden acceleration as a crisis? A crisis interpretation gains power and salience when it spreads among stakeholders. Crisis managers must decide whether the values and interests embodied in the crisis interpretation will appeal to other stakeholders. Such decisions require a clear understanding of one's stakeholders.

Here's an example. In 1990, Philip Morris was challenged for having a high number of billboards selling cigarettes in inner-city areas. The crisis interpretation painted Philip Morris as a racist organization that exploited minorities in the inner city, which worried the

company. About 40 different demonstrations were launched against the company by Reverend Calvin Butts, an inner-city antitobacco advocate. Philip Morris ended the advertising campaign due to fear of a spreading crisis interpretation. It agreed to reduce the number of cigarette billboards in inner-city areas and to join a council that would examine outdoor advertising practices in such areas (Fahey & Dagnoli, 1990). The lesson to be learned here is that if crisis managers believe a crisis interpretation will resonate with other stakeholders, they must work to convince the dominant coalition to accept it as a crisis.

Another scenario involving missed crises is when the dominant coalition purposefully refuses to see one. Embezzlement and successful computer hackings are common crises that are purposely not seen. Even when internal or external audits discover embezzlement, most organizations hide it. The FBI believes that only 10% of all embezzlements are reported. Embezzlement is embarrassing, and many organizations fear that reporting it will encourage more theft or anger shareholders, clients, or customers (Strauss, 1998). Similar reasons exist for not disclosing computer hackings; organizations do not want to appear weak or vulnerable. However, some states, such as California, require disclosure of computer hacking that places individuals' identity at risk (Hopper, 2002). I have had firsthand experience with laws requiring this kind of disclosure. My mortgage company (ABN-Amro) was forced to tell me and other customers when its data tape containing mortgage information was misplaced by a package delivery service (DHL).

Each organization and industry has its own type of crises that are purposely ignored. The organization may take actions to address the problem but choose to keep the situation quiet to avoid involving most stakeholders. The organization is engaging in a form of cover-up. Any cover-up is dangerous; it could be exposed later and trigger a different and more severe crisis (Barton, 2001).

As mentioned, crisis managers can affect the acceptance or rejection of a crisis by how they frame its presentation to the dominant coalition. Crisis managers must have information to support the frame and articulate it in a compelling fashion. Frame development begins with information. Crisis managers need information that indicates that a problem is (a) important—damage will occur or become more severe by spreading; (b) immediate—there are pressures to act now; or (c) uncertain—there is ambiguity surrounding the situation. Any of these three can signal a crisis; if all three are present, it is a compelling situation.

To underline the importance of these points, let's review. Crisis managers should consider the dominant coalition's expertise and basic elements of persuasion when selling the frame. The dominant coalition must be familiar and comfortable with the crisis—see it as within their realm of expertise. Jargon is one way to link a crisis to the dominant coalition's expertise. Vivid stories and examples capture the dominant coalition's attention. The facts about the importance, immediacy, and uncertainty of the crisis are then offered to support the acceptance of the crisis label.

It falls to crisis managers to cure organizational blindness by convincing management to openly acknowledge a situation as a crisis. Crisis managers should sell a situation as a crisis because they believe that enacting the CMP will improve the situation and benefit the organization, its stakeholders, or both. Selling crises is even more difficult when the dominant coalition is purposely ignoring the crisis.

Organizations can be blind to warning signs as well, and the recommendations for selling crises can also be applied to selling prodromes. For instance, a semiconductor manufacturer ignored evidence for 8 years that its lax operating procedures were poisoning workers. A lawsuit by 30 workers alleging widespread ills and workplace abuses brought the problem to light. The case was settled out of court (E. B. Smith, 1998).

CRISES AND INFORMATION NEEDS

Crises can be regarded as information-poor and knowledge-poor situations. A crisis begins as an unknown and must become a known. A typical crisis requires large amounts of information because initially little is known, it is a rapidly changing situation, and often the changes in the situation are more random than predictable. These factors indicate that the information demands of a crisis are complex (Barge, 1994). There is pressure on a crisis team to acquire information and to process it into knowledge quickly and accurately if the team is to operate effectively in a crisis. Understanding and coping with the information and knowledge demands of a crisis is part of crisis management.

Crises as Information Processing and Knowledge Management

Egelhoff and Sen (1992), Seeger et al. (2003), and Weick (1993) have all identified information processing as a major task during crisis management, while Wang and Belardo (2005) emphasize knowledge management as central to crisis management. These are complementary perspectives because information processing is how knowledge is created. *Situation awareness* is a term used to describe this information-processing and knowledge-creating aspect of crisis management. In general, situation awareness describes the point at which the crisis team feels it has enough information and knowledge to make a decision (Kolfschoten & Appelman, 2006). More specially, situation awareness involves perceptions of the situation and environment, comprehension of them, and the ability to project future states (Endsley, 1995). For the CMT, situation awareness indicates that the team has a perception and understanding of the crisis situation and the ability to predict the effects of the crisis and to determine what actions are needed to address it.

A sample crisis illustrates the process of moving from the unknown to the known and creating situation awareness. There is an explosion in an aerosol can facility. The crisis team should know the location of the explosion, the employees working in the area at the time,

the chemicals involved in the process, and the exact tasks performed in the area of the explosion. What the crisis team does not know but needs to know includes who was injured, the nature and severity of the injuries, what emergency actions were taken after the explosion, the amount of damage to the facility, the need to suspend operations, and possible causes of the explosion. The crisis team collects information until they have the knowledge and information about the crisis necessary to make decisions.

The Unknown

The crisis begins with a trigger event or someone convincing management that a crisis exists. Either way, the organization is faced with a problem that now commands the CMT's attention and demands some resolution. The team's first task is to determine what they need to know about the crisis, what they already know, and what they do not know. What they need to know is the information and knowledge required to enact the CMP and to make decisions. What is already known would be the previously collected crisis information and knowledge. What they do not know is the difference between what is needed and what exists in the crisis data bank (all the previously collected crisis information and knowledge, including the CMP and Crisis Appendix). Understanding these three informational concerns allows the crisis team to assess how much they know and what they need to gather in order to cope with the crisis and to reach situation awareness. The team then must try to reduce what they do not know by collecting crisis-relevant information.

INFORMATION GATHERING

Information gathering should be an organized search, not a wild scavenger hunt. In fact, knowledge management strategies were created in large part to aid information collection and analysis. The crisis team must prioritize the information needs as well as know where to go and whom to ask in order to collect the information (Clampitt, 1991). The team must prioritize the needed information because information needs are not equal. High-priority information should receive immediate attention and greater effort (Geraghty & Desouza, 2005). For example, during an industrial accident that vents dangerous gas, the crisis team must know the direction and intensity of the gas cloud before they worry about the cause of the gas venting. Each crisis will determine its own information priorities.

Knowing that certain information is needed is pointless if the team does not know where to get it. Links to organization members and external stakeholders become valuable when a crisis team requires information, because these links are the sources for the requisite information (Pearson & Clair, 1998; Wang & Belardo, 2005). It behooves a crisis team to know the sources of potential crisis-relevant information and knowledge before a crisis hits. Identifying sources of knowledge is known as a *knowledge map* and fits with the CMT contact sheet in the CMP. The idea of developing a crisis knowledge map is discussed shortly.

INFORMATION PROCESSING: THE KNOWN

Raw information is a starting point, not an end point, when trying to understand a crisis. The crisis team must determine what the pieces of information mean. What is typically called *making sense out of information* is information processing. Through processing the information, the team determines whether they have actually assembled the knowledge needed. Only by analyzing information can a team determine whether enough of the requisite knowledge has been collected to convert the unknown into the known. The crisis managers must determine whether they have enough knowledge to make effective decisions, whether they have reached situation awareness. If there is a knowledge deficit, the information gathering continues. If there is enough knowledge, decisions are made about what the organization will do and say about the crisis, which is the domain of Chapter 8.

INFORMATION-PROCESSING PROBLEMS

The crisis management literature treats information processing as a rather simple task. Crisis managers are told to mobilize their resources and to gather all possible information (T. H. Mitchell, 1986). We are led to believe that information is easy to collect and to analyze. However, this is not the case. Research in organizational and small-group communication has found consistent flaws that plague information collecting and processing as well as knowledge sharing (Rollins & Halinen, 2005; Stohl & Redding, 1987). By understanding the following flaws, crisis managers can construct better mechanisms for information collecting and processing: (1) serial reproduction errors, (2) the MUM effect, (3) message overload, (4) information acquisition biases, and (5) group decision-making errors.

Serial Reproduction Errors

Have you ever received a message that has traveled through three or four people before reaching you? The odds are that the message you received made little sense or was far from accurate. This distortion is known as the *serial reproduction problem* or *serial transmission effect.* The more people a message passes through before reaching its final destination, the greater the likelihood of the message being distorted (Daniels, Spiker, & Papa, 1997). Obviously, inaccurate information is problematic during a crisis. It leads to public embarrassment through misstatements to the media and dangerous miscues by a crisis team that has based its decisions on inaccurate information. In January 2006, 13 miners were trapped in a coal mine in Aupsur County, West Virginia. A miscommunication of information resulted in the media reporting 12 of the miners had been found alive and 1 had died (Dao, 2006). The families and friends began to celebrate. Then came the correction: 1 miner was alive and 12 were dead. The emotional pain caused by wrong information during this mine disaster was horrific.

The MUM Effect

One critical source of crisis-related information would be members of the organization. Not surprisingly, people in organizations have a tendency to withhold negative information completely (e.g., information that makes them look bad) or alter the information to make it less damaging (Stohl & Redding, 1987). This phenomenon is known as the *MUM effect*, acting to block the flow of negative or unpleasant information in an organization (Tesser & Rosen, 1975). Crises involve negative situations. Things have gone wrong and threaten the organization in some way (Barton, 2001). Organization members may be reluctant to provide negative information, especially if it could make them or their organization unit look bad.

Some people attribute the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger in 1986 to the MUM effect (Goldhaber, 1990). The night before the Challenger launch (January 27), 15 engineers at Morton Thiokol argued against the launch. Morton Thiokol makes the solid rocket boosters (SRBs) that help to lift a space shuttle into orbit. The SRBs have O-rings (rubber circles) that seal gaps and prevent improper ignition of the solid fuels. The O-rings have no backup. If an O-ring fails, the solid rocket fuel can ignite improperly, explode, and destroy the vehicle. Everyone at NASA was aware of the potential consequences of an O-ring failure. The engineers felt the weather was too cold and would prevent the O-rings from functioning properly. (O-ring failure was determined later to be the cause of the explosion.) Morton Thiokol originally refused to approve the launch. After another meeting, the decision was reversed, and Morton Thiokol green-lit the launch. Middle managers at NASA never told either Arnold Aldrich, the manager of the entire space shuttle program, or Jesse Moore, NASA's associate administrator responsible for the final launch decision, about Morton Thiokol's launch concerns (Boffey, 1986; Mecham, 1986; Sanger, 1986). We can speculate whether either of these two men would have stopped the launch had they known about Morton Thiokol's concerns. However, NASA managers illustrated the MUM effect by not relaying negative information to their superiors. No crisis team can afford to have negative information withheld or modified just to keep a short-term peace or to protect team members.

Message Overload

A common problem experienced by people in organizations is message overload, when people are given more information than they can competently manage (Geraghty & Desouza, 2005; Stohl & Redding, 1987). The risk of information overload is great during a crisis. As noted earlier, crises are information poor, which demands the collecting and processing of large amounts of information to compensate for this information void. The demand for information can produce a vast flow of data into the crisis team. However, the danger is that the information flow becomes overwhelming and blocks the process instead of helping to close the gap between the unknown and the known in the crisis.

Information Acquisition Biases

Because the amount of available information exceeds the human ability to make sense of it, people naturally use selective perception, which means we each focus on certain aspects of the information; we encounter and disregard the rest (Barge, 1994). Weick's (1979) idea of enactment is related to selective perception. The risk in crisis management is as follows: Early on in the crisis, crisis team members form impressions about the nature of the crisis. All subsequent information and knowledge are tested against this initial perception or crisis frame. The crisis team tends to seek information that confirms the initial impression while discounting information that contradicts this impression. Unfortunately, the initial perception may blind the crisis team to critical information and knowledge needed for its decision-making efforts. Another risk arises when members define any new crisis in terms of past crises (Barge, 1994). Rather than treating a new crisis as a novel event, a crisis team can simply view it as a version of some previous crisis. If the past crisis is a poor match, the crisis team applies the wrong template when it addresses the new crisis. The crisis team manages the wrong crisis because it mistakes the new crisis for the old one. In either instance, important nuances about the current crisis are lost. The crisis team discounts potentially important information because of the blinders from initial impressions or baggage from past crises.

These two information acquisition biases can be demonstrated by returning to the case of TWA Flight 800 discussed earlier in this chapter. Initial reports indicated that a bomb was responsible for the incident. The pattern of the blast and the discovery of microscopic traces of PETN, a plastic explosive, on salvaged pieces of the plane were the best evidence. Investigators could have relied on their initial perceptions and examined only the circumstantial evidence supporting the bomb explanation. The remainder of the investigation could have ignored all other possible causes. Another reason to suspect terrorism was the similarity to the Pan Am Flight 103 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. The radar tapes and the voice and flight data recordings of Flight 800 were very similar to those of Flight 103. Investigators could have examined all the remaining evidence through the lens of a previous crisis. As it turned out, Pan Am Flight 103's template was the wrong one to apply to TWA Flight 800 (Gray, 1996; Watson, 1996). Had either of these information acquisition biases been used, the investigators would have ignored the clues to the real cause of the explosion: mechanical failure.

Group Decision-Making Errors

Groups are prone to decision-making errors when they fail to use critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is a process of carefully evaluating information (Williams & Olaniran, 1994). Two tendencies contribute to poor group decision making. First, the group fails to see a problem or fails to identify the correct cause of the problem. The group is led to ignore problems or to solve the wrong problems. Second, the group improperly evaluates its

alternatives for solving a problem (Hirokawa & Rost, 1992). Improper evaluation can lead the group to select an ineffective alternative for solving the problem. Both types of errors result in poor decision making. In each instance, the root cause of the error can be traced to the careless handling of information.

Summary

The purpose of reviewing information-gathering and -processing errors was twofold. First, the errors highlight how difficult information gathering and processing can be. Crisis team members should not underestimate these problems. The problems reveal tensions that exist in organizational communication that can inhibit crisis communication efforts. For instance, the MUM effect indicates a willingness to conceal information when transparency is required in crisis communication efforts, or the need to collect information, but a danger of finding out too much. Second, realization of the problems can help to develop more effective information-gathering and -processing mechanisms for crisis teams. The information gathering and processing should become more effective when the crisis team is trying to counter those errors.

INFORMATION-PROCESSING MECHANISMS

Information-processing mechanisms are designed to aid crisis teams in both the collecting and processing of crisis-relevant information. These mechanisms involve both structural and procedural elements. The structural elements focus on how to collect information, and the procedural elements on how to prevent or reduce processing errors.

Structural Elements

Let me stress once again that crisis managers need to access sources that have information (potential knowledge) they might need during a crisis. Crisis managers must seek out needed information that is not part of their previously assembled crisis database. Communication consultants recognize the value of networks (i.e., relationships with other people), when collecting information. Stronger networks lead to better information gathering and more accurate understanding of problems (Barge, 1994; Clampitt, 1991; Geraghty & Desouza, 2005). Crisis management teams must develop connections they can use to collect crisis-related information. I call the system the *crisis knowledge map,* and it is composed of external and internal stakeholder networks.

The *internal stakeholder network* consists of the people within the crisis team's organization. The foundation of this network stems from the networks of the individual team members. Their contacts and information sources become the team's sources. The crisis team then looks to expand the list by asking each contact for others who may know

about the subject (Barge, 1994). The crisis team should formalize the information by developing a list of contacts for various types of information that might be needed during a crisis, developing an internal stakeholder section for a Crisis Knowledge Map Directory. The Crisis Knowledge Map Directory lists multiple contacts for various types of information the team may need. It can be an appendix to the CMP or a separate document. The Crisis Knowledge Map Directory starts with a listing of the expertise required, which is a way of categorizing people by the type of knowledge they possess. The expertise designation is followed by basic contact information: name, organization and title, phone numbers, pager number, fax number, and e-mail. Multiple contact points are important because if one fails, another can be tried until the person is contacted.

The *external stakeholder network* is composed of people outside of the crisis team's organization. Common members would include customers, government officials, suppliers, distributors, community members, competitors, and investors (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Any external stakeholder could be a part of this network. The Secondary Contact Sheet from the CMP is an essential resource. It provides contact people for all stakeholder groups —and it indicates who in the organization handles each particular stakeholder. The crisis team converts the information from the Secondary Contact Sheet into an external stakeholder section for the Crisis Knowledge Map Directory. The structure of the external section parallels that of the internal section. The difference is that the external section would include the contact person(s) for the various stakeholder groups. The crisis team would have the option of direct contact with the external stakeholder or use of the organization's contact person(s). A contact person is helpful when a positive relationship has been established. The stakeholder should be more open with the contact person given the history of a positive relationship with that person versus having no relational history with a member of the crisis team. The open relationship should make it easier for the contact person to solicit higher-quality information from the external stakeholder.

During a crisis, it is critical to track the amount and movement of crisis-related information and knowledge within the organization. *Crisis information logs* are a useful tool for doing this. Logs record when a crisis team member makes an information request and the result of that request. By logging information requests and receipts, the crisis team knows what information it has and what information it still needs. The log starts with the standard concerns: the time and date of the request, what is requested, requested from whom, the channel used to make the request, and requested by whom. Once this information is received, it is recorded along with the name of the person who received the information. Administrative support staff can help keep the crisis information logs. The CMT needs administrative support to help with this and other tasks during the crisis management process.

Once again, the next step is to evaluate and process the information into knowledge. Team members must decide whether any follow-up information is needed and whether the received information is sufficient. The log notes when the information was processed

(knowledge created) and by whom. Accepted criteria for evaluating information are clarity, timeliness, and depth. *Clarity* means that the information has one interpretation, not multiple interpretations, and people can easily understand what the message means. *Timeliness* means that the information is current and received when needed. *Depth* means that the information seems complete—it answers the questions asked (Barge, 1994).

A hypothetical example demonstrates clarity, timeliness, and depth. Imagine that a hurricane hits the central manufacturing facility of your power tool company. The CMT wants to know when operations will resume. Does the team want to hear "in a reasonable amount of time" (lack of clarity) or "in 5 to 6 days" (clarity)? The CMT needs to know what alternatives are available for maintaining production. Does the team want a business resumption plan that has not been revised in 3 years (is not timely) or a current business resumption plan (timely)? Last, the CMT needs to know about injured workers, people who were on duty when the hurricane struck. Does the team want to learn there were 10 injuries (lack of depth) or the exact names of those injured and the extent of their injuries (depth)? The CMT works best when it receives quality information.

Precision should be stressed in the logs. The information is to be recorded as it is received and not summarized or modified. Precise written records help to eliminate some of the factors that promote serial reproduction errors. Also, having a written record reduces the number of sources used to transmit a message, which again reduces the likelihood of serial reproduction errors.

The crisis information log records when information is requested, when it is received, and whether it has been processed. Time and date help to assess the timeliness of information. Channels are useful in evaluation. The log can help to evaluate the extent to which specific channels were effective in requesting and sending information. Noting who the information was requested from helps to determine if better sources could be used in the future. The source of the information indicates the believability of the information, due in part to the credibility of the source. The log also tracks if, when, and by whom the information was processed. Overall, the log helps the CMT monitor its information-collection and -processing efforts. Crisis teams must collect and store accurate information about the progression of events in a crisis because such documentation is central to postcrisis evaluation, crisis-related lawsuits, and governmental investigations triggered by the crisis.

Procedural Elements

The procedural elements are all actions that can be taken to overcome various information-processing problems. A priority system is one way to combat information overload by using selective criteria to establish the perceived importance of information (Geraghty & Desouza, 2005; Stohl & Redding, 1987). Prioritization is a multistep process involving evaluation, storage, and retrieval. When incoming information is logged, it is also

evaluated. A simple priority system might use three categories: (1) immediate, (2) routine, and (3) miscellaneous. *Immediate* refers to information the crisis team requires for pressing decisions or actions. *Routine* is the basic information a crisis team typically needs during the course of a crisis management effort. *Miscellaneous* is information that is received, has no apparent value, but does have some relationship to the crisis.

Routine and miscellaneous information is stored until the crisis team has time for or need of it. Information might be stored on paper, electronically, or both. Retrieval involves extracting the desired information from the information queue. Storage and retrieval require categorizing the information by topic. The information is assigned a general topic area and a list of key subjects that it covers. The process is similar to cataloging books in a library. Chapter 9 provides additional recommendations for storage and retrieval.

Allowing the crisis team to focus on high-priority information reduces the message load, thereby decreasing information overload. The message priority system should reflect the crisis team's information needs. A contaminated food recall crisis can illustrate and clarify the priority process. Top priorities at the start of a food recall include identifying affected consumers, locating the source of the contamination, and informing consumers about the recall. Information related to any of these three topics would be categorized as immediate during the initial phase of the crisis. Suppose the crisis team received the following information: (1) results of production facility inspections, (2) newspaper stories about the company's crisis management efforts, (3) projected costs of the recall, (4) confirmation that the recall information is being reported in the news media, (5) projections on lost market share, (6) estimated recovery time, (7) confirmed cases of consumer illnesses, (8) consumer reactions to the recall, and (9) Internet newsgroup discussions linking the recall to a government conspiracy.

Information chunks 1 (inspection results), 4 (confirmation of recall in the news media) and 7 (cases of illness) would be recognized as immediate priority. In each case, the information relates directly to the initial priorities of the crisis team. Information chunks 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 would be routine priority. Eventually the crisis team will need to assess the financial damage (3 and 5), estimate the recovery time (6), and evaluate their crisis management performance (2 and 8). Information chunk 9 is miscellaneous because there probably is no government conspiracy here, but the information does pertain to the crisis. When a lot of information is being received and the risk of information overload is high, crisis teams would benefit from an information priority system.

Data splitting is a technique used to combat information acquisition bias. By this method, information is divided into smaller units for more effective analysis. The crisis team can examine these units of information more carefully because they are easier to examine in detail. In addition, smaller units act to break patterns that could feed into preexisting information-processing biases (Barge, 1994). In terms of the TWA Flight 800 case, data splitting would include considering the flight data and radar records separately before placing each into the larger picture of the investigation.

Unfortunately, there is no simple technique for handling the MUM effect. The only proven means is an open communication system in which people engage in the candid disclosure and receipt of facts, even if it is bad news (Redding, 1972). Openness is developed through trust and past interactions with one another (Barge, 1994). Crisis team members must work to earn the trust of organization members and demonstrate that there will not be negative sanctions for passing along information that indicates member mistakes or errors. In a similar way, open and positive relationships with external stakeholders facilitate the flow of accurate information from outside sources (Grunig, 1992).

Group decision-making errors can be combated through vigilance and the devil's-advocate technique. The discussion of crisis team selection touched on vigilance, a form of critical thinking. The four primary elements of vigilance are (1) problem analysis, (2) standards for evaluating alternative choices, (3) understanding the important positive aspects of an alternative choice, and (4) understanding the important negative aspects of an alternative choice. These four elements counter the two group decision-making errors. Problem analysis counters the failure of the group to identify the correct cause of the problem, while standards for evaluating alternative choices and understanding the important positive and negative aspects of an alternative choice compensate for the group improperly evaluating alternatives for solving the problem (Hirokawa & Rost, 1992). The devil's-advocate technique ensures that some group member always voices opposition to a group's plan. The opposition is supposed to lead the group to reevaluate their decisions and reminds the group to examine weaknesses they may have glossed over originally (Barge, 1994).

Training

Stress can be the enemy of the crisis team. While stress can enhance performance by making people more alert and causing them to react faster, it can also create problems such as freezing, misplaced aggression, and ignoring new tools and techniques. Training helps to reduce stress and promote team dynamics that mitigate stress. Part of crisis team training can be on stress-proofing team members. People can learn techniques to help reduce stress in pressure situations. When a team has an open and supportive climate, stress is reduced. Part of training can reinforce the value of open communication and the value of cooperation and support for team members (Paton & Flin, 1999). Training is critical to team learning. In times of stress, people retreat to what is comfortable. New tools and techniques for crisis communication will not be used if team members do not feel comfortable using them before a crisis. The team will ignore the new tools and techniques and go back to what they know. New tools would include new software, hardware, or decision support techniques such as thinkLet (Kolfschoten & Appelman, 2006). If it's important for a crisis team to integrate a new technology or technique into their work, then make sure the members are familiar and comfortable with using it (Hiltz, 2006).

WHAT WOULD YOU DO? WRIGLEY'S ALERT GUM

In April 2013, Wrigley began selling Alert Energy Caffeine Gum in mint and fruit flavors. While not the first caffeine gum, it would be the first with such a wide distribution network through convenience, grocery, and drug stores. The gum has as much caffeine as half a cup of coffee and sells for $2.99. The new product is a chance to increase revenues by moving into the "energy" product market. In the initial information, Wrigley is quick to point out the market for the gum is adults 25 years or older and not children (Isidore, 2013). The reason to mention children in the initial discussion of the caffeine gum is the growing concern in the United States over the potential danger of caffeine drinks for children. Gum is just another way of delivering caffeine to children and has the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) concerned. At the end of April, the FDA held a series of meeting with Wrigley to discuss its concerns about Alert Energy and caffeine for children. Here is a statement made by FDA deputy commissioner Michael Taylor prior to the meetings:

"Today, the environment has changed. Children and adolescents may be exposed to caffeine beyond those foods in which caffeine is naturally found and beyond anything FDA envisioned when it made the determination regarding caffeine in cola. For that reason, FDA is taking a fresh look at the potential impact that the totality of new and easy sources of caffeine may have on the health of children and adolescents, and if necessary, will take appropriate action" (Young, 2013, para. 4).

- If you worked in corporate communication at Wrigley, what would you advise the company to do next?
- What are the arguments to be made to not sell the gum?
- What are the arguments to be made to sell the gum?

CONCLUSION

A crisis cannot be managed effectively if an organization is blind to its details. At times, crisis team members will have to sell a crisis to the dominant coalition before action can be taken to resolve the crisis. This chapter began by offering suggestions for crisis selling. Once the existence of a crisis is recognized, information must be collected and processed into knowledge vital to successful management of the crisis. Crisis teams need accurate and timely information if they are to have the knowledge they need to make effective decisions quickly. While it sounds easy, numerous problems can hinder information gathering and processing. But there are techniques that crisis management teams can adopt to improve their information-gathering and -processing capabilities. Taken together, the material in

this chapter prepares crisis teams for identifying a crisis and processing information into the knowledge needed to resolve it.

CRISIS LEADER COMPETENCIES: INFLUENCE

Oddly, not all crises are obvious to people inside of an organization. Management researchers find that no issue is inherently important or strategic in an organization. Managers create importance by convincing other managers the issue is important, a concept known as "issue selling" (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Sonenshein, 2012). A similar dynamic holds for crises and crisis threats, what we can call "crisis selling." Obviously if a large explosion has ripped a hole in the side of a factory and flames are shooting out of the windows, managers know they are in a crisis. Other times, crisis leaders must persuade other managers that a situation is a crisis or a serious threat that could become a crisis. Organizations are more likely to take action when a situation is called a crisis or a serious crisis threat (James & Wooten, 2010).

James and Wooten (2010) noted crisis leaders must use influence to convince others there is a crisis or threat of a crisis. Crisis leaders draw on rationality (reason) and inspirational appeals (emotions) to create influence. The discussion of persuasion in this chapter captures influence and presents additional factors to build influence, including how to organize persuasive attempts and the value of framing an issue so that it appeals to other managers. This chapter also returns to the value of sense making. The discussion of information processing is intended to help crisis managers find and interpret crisis information that will guide their decision making.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Bribery and computer hacking are two crises that are often unreported. What other crises are organizations likely to hide? What types of information does a university prefer that potential students not have?
2. Organizations keep saying how much customer service means to them. Why are so many crises caused by not paying enough attention to consumers?
3. Why would a crisis manager need to sell a crisis to other managers?
4. Why would a crisis manager want to sell a crisis to other managers?

CHAPTER 8

Crisis Response

Once a crisis hits, the crisis team must work to (a) prevent it from spreading to unaffected areas of the organization or the environment and (b) limit its duration (Mitroff, 1994). Communication presents unique challenges during the response phase. Internally, the crisis team must collect and process information in order to make decisions, which were discussed in earlier chapters. Externally, stakeholders must be informed about the crisis and actions must be taken to address it, including reporting the organization's progress toward recovery. The advent of social media has added to the challenge.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Carefree Cruise Line: Act 2

It is 12 hours since the report of a distress call from a ship in one of your sub-brands off the coast of Italy. The crisis is already generating a great deal of media coverage in Europe and the United States. This coverage is found in both the traditional and online news media. The ship hit a rock and sank quickly not too far from shore. The ship was evacuated but there are passengers and crew who are unaccounted for and authorities have begun to locate bodies of crew and of passengers who died in the accident. There is not a clear number of injured or dead yet. Pictures are appearing on television, in print publications, and online of the cruise ship lying on its side in the water. There are also images of and interviews with passengers who survived the sinking. Carefree Cruise Lines has a very active Facebook page. The company regularly posts messages to the site and people comment on posts. There are over 250,000 fans of the Carefree Cruise Lines Facebook page. The company and the CEO each have a Twitter account. Neither the company nor the CEO has a blog. While active, the company's Twitter account has a little over 50,000 followers. Messages on the Facebook page and Twitter are coordinated—a basic messages is adapted for each channel. Your social media manager oversees the creation of social media messages and monitors the online discussion about Carefree Cruise Lines. The increasing media coverage is intensifying the crisis.

- How would you adjust your crisis response to fit the picture of the crisis that is now emerging? Why would you make each of those changes?

- How would you integrate the company's social media into the crisis response?
- What would be the objective(s) of your crisis communication efforts?
- Which audiences would you be targeting with your crisis communication messages and why?
- Would you recommend starting a company blog? Why or why not?
- What other social media channels might you utilize in your crisis communication efforts, and why might each be helpful?

Discussions of external crisis communication must include form, strategy, and content. *Form* is how the response should be presented and is a tactical aspect of crisis communication. *Strategy* emphasizes the way crisis communication is used to achieve certain outcomes. *Content* is what is said and is an extension of strategy.

FORM OF THE CRISIS RESPONSE

The form of a crisis response is mentioned more frequently than any other topic in the crisis management writings. The crisis response includes the first public statements the spokesperson makes about the crisis. This first statement typically is delivered through the mass media or the Internet, hence the concern in crisis management with media relations and the Internet (e.g., Barton, 2001; Lerbinger, 1997). The focus on the initial response stems from the fact that first impressions form quickly and color the remainder of stakeholders' reception of the crisis communication efforts (Sen & Egelhoff, 1991). In any crisis, stakeholder information needs to occur simultaneously with the crisis team's information needs.

In terms of the form of crisis communications, recommendations are to be quick, consistent, and open. It is important to keep in mind that crisis communication transpires in times of stress. Stakeholders will not be at their best for receiving information. Research suggests that people's ability to process information is reduced by up to 80% during emotionally charged situations (Gilman, 2004). Crisis teams must take care to craft and send crisis messages so that they can be clearly and easily understood.

Responding Quickly

The terms *quick* and *quickly* are commonly used when describing an effective crisis response. The need for speed in crisis communication continues to escalate as technology accelerates the spread of information, thereby actually reducing the amount of time a crisis team has for responding (Barton, 2001). The media report crises very quickly, including posting the stories online by media outlets or by so-called citizen journalists. In some cases, the key stakeholders affected by the crisis learn about it from media or online reports before

they have been officially notified, creating a bad situation for the organization. The quicker the stakeholders can hear about a crisis from the media, the quicker the crisis team must respond. Emergency room physicians talk about the *golden hour*. Dr. R. Adams Cowley coined the phrase because he felt if he stopped the bleed and restored blood pressure within the first hour, he could save the patient. Some experts treat crises like medical emergencies (Friedman, 2002) and subscribe to a similar 1-hour rule when providing the initial crisis response.

Obviously, speed increases risks. As the crisis team must act quickly, it can make mistakes. The primary risk associated with speed is the potential for inaccuracies (C. A. P. Smith & Hayne, 1997). Johnson & Johnson committed a quickness mistake when handling the original Tylenol product-tampering crisis. In 1982, seven people in the Chicago area died from taking cyanide-laced Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules. A reporter asked if cyanide was used in the Tylenol manufacturing facility, and the Johnson & Johnson spokesperson responded that there was no cyanide in the plant that produced Tylenol. The statement was in error; the testing laboratories at the production facility did use cyanide. At the time of the press conference, the spokesperson did not have all the relevant information, and the error was corrected as soon as it was discovered (Berg & Robb, 1992; Leon, 1983; L. Snyder, 1983). But speed does not have to mean mistakes, and the benefits of a rapid initial response far outweigh the risks.

It is accurate to say that a crisis creates an information void. Nature abhors a vacuum. Any information void will be filled somehow and by someone. The media have deadlines, so they are driven to fill the information void quickly. And media demands trigger a chain reaction. The media are going to report on a crisis. Stakeholders may find that the news media are their primary or initial source of crisis-related information (Fearn-Banks, 2001), with the Internet increasing in use as well ("Lackluster Online PR No Aid in Crisis Response," 2002). If the crisis team does not supply the initial crisis information to the media, some other groups will, and they may be ill informed, misinformed, or motivated to harm the organization. The information void can become filled with rumor and speculation, not facts (Caruba, 1994). Whatever the case, the initial crisis information may well be incorrect and may intensify the damage created by the crisis. A quick response helps to ensure that stakeholders receive accurate crisis-related information and hear the organization's side of the story.

Silence is a very passive response and reflects uncertainty and passivity, the exact opposite of what an organization should be attempting to create. A silent response suggests that an organization is not in control and is not trying to take control of how it or the crisis is perceived by stakeholders (Hearit, 1994). Silence allows others to take control of the situation (Brummett, 1980) and define the crisis for stakeholders. Silence is much worse than responding in a crisis (Ferrin, Kim, Cooper, & Dirks, 2005). A quick response helps to create the impression of control and is necessary to get the organization's definition of the crisis—its side of the story—into the media and out to the stakeholders (Heath, 1994;

Kempner, 1995; T. H. Mitchell, 1986). From the stakeholders' viewpoint, a quick response demonstrates that the organization is taking action and is capable of responding to a crisis (Darling, 1994; Maynard, 1993). Conversely, a slow response makes an organization appear to be incompetent (Donath, 1984). Control is important to credibility; it is part of the organization's expertise. A crisis indicates a lack of control in and by the organization (Heath, 1994). A quick response is a first step in reasserting organizational control and reestablishing organizational credibility (Augustine, 1995).

Stealing thunder illustrates the benefits of a quick response. Researchers have found that organizational managers and the organization are viewed as more credible when the organization reported the crisis before other sources, that is, by stealing thunder (Arpan & Pompper, 2003; Arpan & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2005; Claeys & Cauberghe, 2010). The measure of credibility used in the studies overlaps with the organizational reputation instrument used in many other crisis studies, which is based on credibility assessments related to trustworthiness (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). Therefore we can conclude that a quick response does have reputational protection benefits.

However, there are limits to being able to respond quickly. In some crises, it takes time to collect and process the necessary information. Large-scale accidents produce great confusion. A January 1998 explosion at a Sierra Chemical dynamite manufacturing facility 10 miles east of Reno, Nevada, exemplifies the limits to quickness. Initial reports on January 7 listed eight injured, three known dead, and two missing. A report later that same day listed six injured, five missing, and no confirmed deaths. The next day, officials had the final count: six injured and four missing, presumed to be dead. It seems one of the five people originally listed as missing had not reported to work on January 7 (Ryan, 1998; "Several Missing in Nevada Explosion," 1998). There was a repeat of the speed error problem during the 2006 Sago mine tragedy in West Virginia. Relatives were told that all the miners were alive, when in fact only one survived. This fateful error added to the suffering of the families and townspeople. It is important to acknowledge that it takes time to collect some types of information.

A crisis team might have to appear before the media or post information online with an incomplete story. That is OK. There is no sin in telling the media the crisis team does not know something but will provide the information as soon as possible. Consider a variation of the Sierra Chemical case: The crisis team decides to delay a press conference until it has all of the information about the explosion. In the meantime, the local news media are telling people about suspected causes. Perhaps a disgruntled, former employee claims the accident was due to mismanagement. Mismanagement is the explanatory theme reported as a likely cause of the blast because no other reasons are forthcoming. The initial news stories have Sierra Chemical responsible for the workers' deaths and injuries. This theme frames the thinking of reporters and other stakeholders. Speculation and rumor inadvertently become crisis fact, at least for a while. Better to have the spokesperson saying that the cause or extent of damages is still under investigation than stakeholders being fed inaccurate

information.

Lack of information and knowledge coupled with the need for a fast response can beget two media communication "sins." The first is "no comment." The danger is that stakeholders hear "we're guilty" instead of "no comment." (See Chapter 5's discussion of spokesperson training for more on "no comment" statements and silence.) Better to say that the information is not yet available but will be reported to the media as soon as it is received. This brings up the second sin: not delivering on the information promised to the media or other stakeholders (Birch, 1994; Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1995). A good organization-stakeholder relationship is built on trust, and trust requires an organization to deliver on its promises. Failure to provide promised information damages the organization-media relationship, thereby eroding the organization's credibility with the media. If information is promised, it had better be delivered in some way.

Finally, responding quickly to a crisis should not be confused with resolving a crisis quickly. Response time is a tactical element of the crisis response, while resolving a crisis is a strategic element. Managers can respond quickly to the initial reports of a crisis, even be the first to report the crisis, but that does not mean the crisis is resolved. Depending on the nature of the crisis situation, it can take weeks or months to resolve a crisis. For instance, the investigation of an industrial accident can take months to complete, while efforts to track a foodborne illness can take weeks. In each example, the crisis cannot be resolved until some determination of the cause is identified. Addressing the cause of the crisis is important to providing closure for stakeholders.

Speaking With One Voice: Consistency

The organization must deliver consistent messages to stakeholders, and a unified response promotes consistency. As mentioned previously, consistency does not mean having just one person speak for the organization every time there is a public statement, as some crisis experts recommend (Carney & Jorden, 1993). Rather, speaking with one voice means coordinating the efforts of the official spokespersons and discouraging other organizational members from becoming unofficial spokespersons (Seitel, 1983). Chapter 5 detailed this point in its discussion of the spokesperson. The crisis team must ensure that the team of spokespersons is well prepared to ensure consistency in their responses. Spokespersons sharing the same information base are more consistent than those who do not. As noted in Chapter 5, message maps help to establish consistency when there are multiple spokespersons (Covello, Minamyer, & Clayton, 2007). Consistency is essential to building the credibility of the response. A consistent message is more believable than an inconsistent one (Clampitt, 1991; Garvin, 1996).

There is no way to ensure the consistency or accuracy of messages from unofficial spokespersons, and these can be any employee the media happen to persuade to answer questions. Also, employees may mention the crisis in their own social media accounts such

as a tweet or a Facebook post. The crisis management plan (CMP) specifies the process for handling inquiries, which should be reinforced to employees so that they fight the urge to speak for the company. The organization's social media policy can contain a section that covers social media use during a crisis. It is hard for employees to resist the opportunity to be on the local news. A camera crew appears as an employee is leaving work. The employee has a chance to be on television. Why not comment on the crisis? Most employees are not aware of the perils of talking to reporters who are thirsty for a scoop. Employees have First Amendment rights, meaning an organization cannot completely stop them from posting messages about their crisis experience to their personal social media accounts. On the other hand, the crisis team should have some control over the official social media channels to create consistent messages. The concern is that speculation and rumor can enter the media through comments made by unofficial spokespersons.

Employees will talk to friends and family about the crisis in person and through various media. Employee communication about a crisis can be positive for an organization. Employees are considered more credible (trusted) than CEOs of organizations (Edelman, 2013). That means employees can be useful conduits for relaying accurate crisis information to stakeholders. The best defense against inappropriate/inaccurate employee comments is to keep employees informed. They should receive timely updates through a mix of the intranet, mass notifications, social media, and personal briefings. If employees understand the crisis, they can better articulate it to the media, friends, and family. The CMP and crisis training can help to avoid inconsistency by reinforcing the value of and ways to create consistency.

Openness

The openness of an organization is a multifaceted concept. Openness means (a) availability to the media, (b) willingness to disclose information, and (c) honesty. A spokesperson should answer inquiries in a timely fashion, immediately if the information is available. In a crisis, the focus is on the media, but other stakeholders may ask or demand that their questions be answered, especially if social media is being used. Neighbors of a facility may want to know how a chemical leak might affect them, or investors might want to know the financial impact of the crisis. If an organization uses social media in its crisis response, stakeholders might expect interaction, meaning that they are likely to ask for information and expect a response. The foundation for availability should have been developed prior to the crisis, especially with respect to blogs and microblogs. The organization should have a history of being responsive to the needs of stakeholders. During a crisis, this responsiveness takes the form of spokespersons or other crisis team members making every reasonable attempt to respond to questions promptly. Reasonableness is an important qualifier.

As I've mentioned, sometimes the situation does not allow for an immediate response.

When delays are necessary, tell stakeholders why the question cannot be answered and when they might be able to expect a response (C. J. Stewart & Cash, 1997). Never let a request go unacknowledged, or you risk damaging the stakeholder-organization relationship. Communication with stakeholders is a two-way process. You must honor their requests if you expect them to accept the organization's messages.

A typical struggle in crisis management is between the legal perspective for limited disclosure of crisis-related information and the public relations perspective for full disclosure (Fitzpatrick & Rubin, 1995; Kaufmann, Kesner, & Hazen, 1994; Twardy, 1994; Tyler, 1997). The choice actually is on a continuum between saying as little as possible (limited disclosure) and revealing everything the organization knows about the crisis (full disclosure). Cautious full disclosure is preached heavily in crisis management circles (Kaufmann et al., 1994). However, full disclosure is rarely possible or advisable. Some crisis-related information may be proprietary, covered by privacy laws, involve company policies, or be otherwise sensitive. This means some information cannot be disseminated publicly. At other times, full disclosure could exacerbate a crisis by escalating the direct and indirect costs of litigation. Direct costs involve the amount of money awarded to plaintiffs, while indirect costs include trial costs, personnel matters, lost work time, deaths, serious injuries, and possible regulatory changes (Kaufmann et al., 1994). Organizations must consider their responsibility to stockholders, creditors, and employees as well as to victims (Tyler, 1997). Simply put, there are times when an organization must protect its financial assets. Crisis managers choose what level of disclosure to employ during a crisis. Today, issues of disclosure may be called *transparency*. Transparency involves the availability of organizational information to stakeholders. The more transparent the organization, the more information stakeholders have about that organization and the easier their access to that information (Gower, 2006). Stakeholders may ask how transparent an organization is when it comes to crisis information.

The community right-to-know informs the discussion of the willingness to disclose information In 1986, the U.S. Congress passed the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act. Here is how the Environmental Protection Agency describes the right-to-know:

> The community right-to-know provisions help increase the public's knowledge and access to information on chemicals at individual facilities, their uses, and releases into the environment. States and communities, working with facilities, can use the information to improve chemical safety and protect public health and the environment. (Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, 2012, para. 1)

The belief is that information about chemicals will empower the community and help to minimize the likelihood and impact from accidents involving chemicals (Heath & Palenchar, 2009). As Hadden (1989) observes, technical data alone is not enough. Risk communication needs to translate the technical data into a format that is usable for the community if that information is to empower the community (Heath & Palenchar, 2009). Recently there have been failed efforts to extend the community right-to-know to the food supply and pharmaceuticals.

The community right-to-know demonstrates an underlying moral obligation to inform people about potential threats in their environments. Knowing about these threats helps stakeholders prepare for, cope with, and be involved in the reduction of the threats. Organizations should not have to be compelled by laws or regulations to disclose crisis-related information that can have a material effect on decisions and actions taken by stakeholders. Instead, the willingness to disclose information should be driven by a moral obligation to protect stakeholders. The question for crisis communicators is not "What should be disclosed?" but "What do people need to know?"

The disclosure debate raises the question of honesty. A common recommendation for crisis managers is to be honest and not lie to stakeholders. Stakeholders are angrier when an organization lies about a crisis than when an organization simply has a crisis (Caruba, 1994). Limited disclosure—not revealing critical information—is not meant to be a form of deception. In fact, an organization should fully disclose any and all information about a crisis if there are risks of further harm or even death resulting from the crisis. Limited disclosure should not be used as a form of stonewalling. It should be used to disclose only the information stakeholders need to know. Of course, what stakeholders need to know is difficult to define, and each crisis management team should establish guidelines for when it will utilize full or limited disclosure. (See Kaufmann et al., 1994, and Tyler, 1997, for discussions about the ethics and procedures for using limited disclosure.) Remember, lack of honesty seriously damages organization-stakeholder relationships, destroys the organization's reputation, and can lead to massive monetary awards against the organization in future lawsuits (Fitzpatrick, 1995).

A STRATEGIC FOCUS IN CRISIS COMMUNICATION

The form crisis communication discussion is mostly tactical. I have tried to bring more strategy to the discussion by explaining the rationale for the dominant form recommendation. The content crisis communication discussion has a stronger strategic focus. There is a clearer rationale for what the crisis managers should say or do and why certain content will succeed or fail. The discussion of strategy is incomplete without considering objectives and target audiences.

Objectives: What Crisis Communication Hopes to Accomplish

Objectives are what guide strategy; they represent the desired outcomes. To be strategic, crisis communication must be trying to achieve some objective or objectives. Before we discuss the crisis response strategies, it is helpful to consider the typical outcomes desired from crisis communication. The goal of crisis communication is to reduce the damage a crisis inflicts on an organization and its stakeholders. But how does this translate into

specific objectives?

Too often in crisis management, the emphasis is too much on the organization. As we shall discuss more shortly, the top priority in a crisis is public safety. The top objective for crisis communication should be to prevent harm to stakeholders. Crisis teams must ensure the physical safety and psychological well-being of stakeholders affected by the crisis. The initial objective should be to minimize physical and psychological harm to stakeholders. However, most writings about crisis communication take public safety for granted and focus on reputation management. The desired outcomes for stakeholders would include minimal physical and psychological harm from the crisis. The challenge is to translate the outcomes into specific objectives that require some target amount. Physical harm objectives can be built around the number of people injured. A sample physical harm objective might be "To limit the number of people injured by the crisis to 11." Psychological well-being objectives can be constructed around the amount of distress felt by stakeholders. A sample psychological well-being objective might be "To have less than 5% of stakeholders reporting moderate levels of distress."

Organization-related outcomes include the protection of reputation, market share, stock price, sales, and word of mouth. The most common reputation management objective for crisis communication is to reduce the amount of media coverage, both traditional and social media (*Rising CCO IV,* 2012). A more refined objective is to reduce the amount of negative media coverage. While crisis managers want to end media coverage (traditional and social media), there can be situations in which the crisis response generates positive media coverage. An example would be if the organization is praised for a very effective response. Generating positive media coverage can happen and is a goal of crisis leadership —accentuating the opportunity aspect of a crisis (James & Wooten, 2010). The idea is that after the crisis response, the percentage of media coverage that is negative drops while the percentage of media coverage that is positive increases (Paine, 2011). The belief is that negative media coverage damages an organization while positive media coverage is beneficial. Another concern is for media to carry the organization's crisis message. Crisis teams create messages and benefit when the media repeat their key messages (Paine, 2011). Part of using the organization's message is utilizing the organization as a source. Ideally, the organization is the dominant source of information for media reports. No matter who is used as a source, the organization wants the media to report accurate (correct) information about the crisis. Therefore, an objective can be included to assess the percentage of media reports that are accurate (accurate from the organization's point of view). Finally, if an organization regularly tracks its reputation, it can compare pre- and postcrisis scores to assess the effects of the crisis on the organization.

Below is a list of objectives that could be used for the major organization-related crisis outcomes. The outcomes reflect both business and communication objectives. There are times in crisis management that the business and communication objectives may conflict with one another:

1. Media coverage favorability objective: "An increase in the percentage of positive media statements and a decrease in negative media statements after the release of the crisis response." (communication objective)
2. Media utilization of crisis messages objectives: "That 20% of media reports include the key crisis message" and "There are more media reports that use the organization as a source than media reports that do not use the organization as a source." (communication objective)
3. Media fairness objective: "That 95% of the media reports provide accurate information about the crisis." (communication objective)
4. Reputation measurement objective: "A less than 15% drop in reputation after the crisis." (business objective)
5. Market share objective: "A less than 12% drop in market share a month after the crisis." (business objective)
6. Stock price objective: "A less than 8% drop in share price a month after the crisis." (business objective)
7. Sales objective: "A less than 10% drop in sales a month after the crisis." (business objective)
8. Word-of-mouth objective: "A less than 15% increase in negative word of mouth after the crisis." (communication objective)

Objectives set standards for the crisis team to evaluate their efforts. We will return to the objectives of crisis communication in the discussions of evaluating crisis communication efforts in Chapter 9 when we discuss assessing crisis communication and management efforts.

The Target Audiences for Crisis Response Strategies

Part of strategy formation is the consideration of the target audience. In a crisis, we can identify two broad target audiences: victims and nonvictims (Coombs, 1995). Victims are defined as those people injured in some way by the crisis. Injuries can be any combination of physical harm, psychological harm, property damage, or financial loss. Examples would be people poisoned by a foodborne illness or passengers stranded on a disabled cruise ship. Victims can include customers, employees, community members, and shareholders. It is important to note that victims are typically primary stakeholders who are central to continued operation of an organization. The victims will have a direct and visceral connection to the crisis. The public crisis messages are designed more for nonvictims than for victims. Organizations frequently will use direct, private communication with victims.

Nonvictims can be further divided into potential victims and voyeurs. Potential victims were not harmed by the crisis event but potentially could have been. A product harm crisis illustrates this point. Potential victims would include any who used the product in question

but were not harmed and those who are potential buyers of that product. Potential victims have the sense that they could have been harmed by the crisis. Still, the lack of harm makes the crisis experience qualitatively different for potential victims and victims.

Voyeur audiences are watching the crisis to see how the organization responds but are not at risk of being harmed. People who followed the BP oils spill in the Gulf of Mexico in traditional and social media but were not harmed nor at risk of harm for the crisis illustrate the voyeur audience. The voyeur audience can include traditional and online media outlets, government agencies, and activists interested in an organization or a particular industry. Voyeurs use the crisis response as part of the evidence they use to evaluate organizations. Potential victims and voyeurs are less involved in the crisis than victims but can still experience the emotions generated by the crisis.

Voyeurs and potential victims do matter during a crisis. If these audiences dislike the crisis response, it will damage their relationships and future interactions with the organization in crisis. When examining apologies, "perhaps the value of apologies, then, may lie in convincing observers (and not victims) that the transgressor is a good person" (De Cremer, Pillutla, & Folmer, 2011, p. 47). The same logic holds true for crisis response strategies in general. The value of crisis response strategies may be in convincing nonvictims (potential victims and voyeurs) that the organization is taking the appropriate actions including showing the requisite respect for victims.

CONTENT OF THE CRISIS RESPONSE

What is actually said during a crisis has serious ramifications for the success of the crisis management effort. As mentioned, key goals in the crisis management process are to prevent or minimize damage, maintain the organization's operations, and repair reputational damage. Clear communication is essential to each of these goals. Crisis response content can be divided into three sequential categories: (1) instructing information, (2) adjusting information, and (3) reputation management. The first messages must present instructing information, followed by adjusting information, then reputation repair (Sturges, 1994). I would argue that instructing and adjusting information are the foundation for any crisis response. In fact, many crises can be managed effectively without even utilizing reputation management. Again, clarity is a concern because emotions will reduce stakeholders' ability to process information.

Instructing Information: Physical Harm

Instructing information focuses on telling stakeholders what to do to protect themselves physically in the crisis. People are the first priority in any crisis, so instructing information must come first. When a crisis hits, stakeholders need to know how the crisis will or might affect them. They should be told if there is anything they need to do in order to protect

themselves physically. They may need to know how to evacuate an area, find adequate shelter-in-place, boil drinking water, go somewhere for assistance, or return a defective product (Sturges, 1994). Instructing information satisfies the needs of both the stakeholders and the crisis team. The stakeholders receive the information they require to protect themselves; the crisis team cultivates the perception that the organization is once more in control of the situation.

Product harm and accidents illustrate the need for instructing information. Products can be defective and place the users at risk. Here's an example. In May 2010, Hoover recalled over 100,000 vacuums because they posed a shock hazard. The retractable cord was not properly routed, allowing it to loosen, thus creating a shock and fire hazard. Hoover received three complaints of burned carpet and one report of a consumer burning a hand. The Hoover website provided extensive details about the recall, including the exact model numbers. There were also a number of images, including video, to help people identify the model number on Hoover vacuums (Techtronic Floor Care Technology, n.d.).

Here's another example. On average, 40,000 people each year must be either evacuated or sheltered in place because of a chemical release (Kleindorfer, Freeman, & Lowe, 2000). In October 2009, 65 homes in Freeport, Texas, had to be evacuated due to a leak in a pipeline at a Dow Chemical facility. Dow workers went door to door within a six-block radius of the facility to notify community members of the need to evacuate. Dow made special arrangements for Joe Diaz because he was disabled and required dialysis. Dow transported Mr. Diaz to a hotel in a van and had a dialysis machine set up in the hotel where Dow was housing the displaced residents ("Dow Chemical Plant Leak," 2009). Instructing information is a natural fit with message maps. Crisis managers can anticipate the type of questions/concerns stakeholders may have related to physical protection and develop message maps for them. Crisis managers want stakeholders to follow the instructing information, so the message map emphasis on clarity and simplicity is ideal.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), which provides vital information about product recalls in the United States, illustrates the value of instructing information. Each recall announcement includes the product's name, the hazard it presents, incidents/injuries, a description of the product, the model number and where to locate it on the product, where the product was sold, the remedy, and contact information should consumers need additional information. The announcements also include pictures of the products to help consumers determine whether they have that product. Some products even have videos that illustrate the hazard and how to locate the model number. Box 8.1 provides a sample CPSC product recall announcement. Social media is integrated into the CPSC instructing information efforts; video can be found on YouTube, images of recalled products are uploaded to Flickr, and people can follow the CPSC on Twitter. More traditional online channels are used as well; consumers can sign up for e-mail alerts about recalls or link their websites to the CPSC website.

BOX 8.1 CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION RECALL ANNOUNCEMENT

Walmart Recalls General Electric Coffee Makers Due to Fire Hazard

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed. It is illegal to resell or attempt to resell a recalled consumer product.

Name of Product: General Electric-branded 12-cup digital coffee makers

Units: About 900,000

Importer: Walmart Stores Inc., of Bentonville, Ark.

Hazard: The coffee maker can overheat, posing fire and burn hazards to consumers.

Incidents/Injuries: Walmart has received 83 reports of overheating, smoking, melting, burning and fire, including three reports of minor burn injuries to consumer's hands, feet and torso. Reports of property damage include a significant kitchen fire and damage to countertops, cabinets and a wall.

Description: This recall involves General Electric-brand 12-cup coffee makers sold in white or black. The digital coffee maker has programmable functions and plastic housing. The GE logo is printed on the base of the coffee maker and the model number is printed on the bottom of the base. Model numbers included in the recall are: 169164, 169165.

No other models are included in this recall.

Sold exclusively at: Walmart stores nationwide from March 2008 through January 2010 for about $30.

Manufactured in: China

Remedy: Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled coffee makers and return the product to any Walmart for a full refund.

Consumer Contact: For additional information, contact Walmart at (800) 925-6278 between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. CT Monday through Friday, or visit the firm's website at www.walmart.com.

Source: http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml10/10238.html

Business continuity creates a second type of instructing information—how the crisis affects business operations. As noted in the CMP discussion, business continuity plans outline what the organization will do to maintain operations and to restore business as usual. Various stakeholders must receive information about the implementation of the business continuity plan. For example, maintaining operations may involve renting equipment, using different facilities, and even hiring other employees. In terms of business continuity, this is known as *interim processing* (Myers, 1993). All the people and vendors necessary to get the interim processing phase up and running must be contacted and given specific instructions. Moreover, employees, suppliers, and distributors must know how the interim processing affects them. When and where do employees report to work? When and where are deliveries to be made? Is the supply chain disrupted, and if so, how long is that expected to continue? These are critical questions that the crisis team must answer through instructing information. Once business is restored to normal, the relevant stakeholders must be informed of the change as well (Myers, 1993).

At this point, the crisis team must consider connecting with employee assistance programs. Employees need to know such instructing information as how they will be paid during the crisis and how benefits information will be processed. Human resources people are important crisis team members when it comes to handling employee assistance concerns.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Diamond Pet Foods and Toxic Dog Food: Act 1

In late 2005, reports began to surface of dogs suffering from aflatoxin in their food, with at least 76 dying from it. Aflatoxin is a fungus on corn that can damage a dog's liver. The Food and Drug Administration found that all of the stricken dogs had been eating Diamond pet food. The company tests all corn shipments for aflatoxin and rejects shipments that test too high. Diamond Pet Foods decided to recall the related dog food products. What type of instructing information would consumers need? What other messages would you include in your crisis response and why? What would you do to help make sure pet owners hear of this recall? What other groups might be willing to help get your message to owners?

Adjusting Information: Psychological Well-being

Adjusting information helps stakeholders cope psychologically with the crisis. Crisis communication can be used to promote the psychological well-being of victims. Stress is created by the uncertainty and potential harm of a crisis. On a basic level, stakeholders need to know what happened: the *what, when, where, why,* and *how* of the crisis (Ammerman, 1995; Bergman, 1994). Stakeholders are reassured when they know what happened. Moreover, they want information about what is being done to prevent a repeat of the crisis and to protect them from future crises. Communicating action taken to prevent a similar crisis is known as *corrective action.* Corrective action reduces psychological stress by reassuring stakeholders that their safety is a priority (Sellnow, Ulmer, & Snider, 1998). Stakeholders are reassured when they know the crisis situation is being controlled. Adjusting information furthers the perception that the organization has regained control of the situation. It is desirable to present corrective action as early as possible in the crisis response. The limitation to corrective action is that it may take time to develop. The cause of a crisis may take weeks or months to uncover (Ray, 1999). Corrective actions cannot be developed until the cause is known. If an attempt is made without solid knowledge, it is speculating, and that violates a basic *don't* of crisis communication. If crisis managers speculate and are wrong, they appear to be deceptive or incompetent.

A variation of corrective action is the *renewal response strategy* (*rhetoric of renewal*), which takes a positive approach to crisis communication. The focus is on rebuilding confidence and restoring the organization, not on assigning or averting blame (Seeger & Ulmer, 2001; Sellnow, Seeger, & Ulmer, 2002; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2002; Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2006). Ulmer's (2001) study of Malden Mills's recovery from a devastating fire illustrates renewal. The owner, Aaron Feurstein, pledged to rebuild the mill and to pay workers until it was rebuilt. For renewal to work, the organization needs a favorable reputation, or the promises of renewal will ring hollow. The renewal pledge must be consistent with the organization's core values (Ulmer & Sellnow, 2002). Though limited as to when it can be employed, renewal can be a very powerful and positive crisis response for psychological adjustment. We will return to renewal efforts in Chapter 9.

Employee assistance programs are critical for adjusting information. Crises are traumatic incidents that can produce debilitating levels of stress. Traumatic stress incidents overwhelm a person's ability to cope. Seeing people injured or killed in accidents, workplace violence, or natural disasters all qualify as traumatic stress incidents. Immediate and long-term interventions, such as defusing and debriefing, may be necessary to help employees and perhaps other stakeholders adjust properly. Defusing sessions are conducted immediately after the crisis and provide a framework to help people cope. Debriefing sessions are therapeutic interventions at the group or individual level. Any type of traumatic stress response should be handled by qualified professionals.

As noted earlier, crises have the potential to create an entirely new class of stakeholders: victims. These are the people who have suffered physically, mentally, or financially from the crisis. For instance, employees may be injured in an industrial accident, customers may

be traumatized by the violence in an accident, or investors may lose dividends due to the costs of a recall or a drop in stock prices. Victims expect an organization to express concern for them (Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Sen & Egelhoff, 1991). Expressions of concern make victims feel better about the crisis and hold less animosity toward the organization (Cohen, 2002; B. Kellerman, 2006). Expressing compassion does not mean an organization necessarily admits responsibility, though. Rather, the spokesperson expresses sympathy and concern for the victims. Sympathy can be expressed without incurring the liability associated with taking responsibility for a crisis (Fitzpatrick, 1995; Tyler, 1997). The key is that the expression of concern cannot include an overt statement accepting responsibility. However, lawyers may still try to use expressions of concern against an organization in court. Texas, California, Florida, and Massachusetts all have laws that prohibit statements of concern from being used as evidence to prove fault in civil cases (Cohen, 2002; Fuchs-Burnett, 2002).

Crisis managers can extend expressions of concern and sympathy by holding memorials for those who were killed in the crisis, or other events in honor of those who were injured. When a memorial is held soon after the crisis, it will be viewed as part of the crisis response. West Pharmaceuticals honored the six people killed in its Kinston, North Carolina, facility shortly after the blast. The memorial service was titled "A Service of Healing and Remembrance." Transocean held a memorial service for the 11 employees lost on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico while efforts continued to stop the well from spewing oil into the ocean. Memorial services put some action behind the expression of sympathy and provide a mechanism to promote grieving and healing. The idea of memorials and the ability to help those emotionally affected by crises is developed further in Chapter 9.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Bausch & Lomb and ReNu with MoistureLoc: Act 2

It is April 10, 2006, and the Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have posted a warning about Fusarium keratitis on their websites. The messages note that ReNu with MoistureLoc was used by 26 of 30 people interviewed about having infections. The messages also note that Bausch & Lomb has stopped producing and shipping ReNu with MoistureLoc and that investigations so far have shown no proof that the product causes the infection. At this point, there has been no recall of the product. However, large retailers, such as Walmart, Walgreens, CVS, and Rite Aid, are pulling the product from their shelves. Bausch & Lomb tells people about stopping shipments, informs people about the warning signs of a Fusarium keratitis infection, and reminds people to properly clean their contact lenses. Messages from the American Optometric Association reinforce the Bausch & Lomb message by saying improper cleaning can lead to Fusarium

keratitis. Do you agree that this is the right response from Bausch & Lomb? From the retailers? What do you like or dislike about the response from Bausch & Lomb? From the retailers?

A slight complication appears. The government and news media report that similar outbreaks of Fusarium keratitis hit Singapore and Hong Kong in November 2006. Bausch & Lomb voluntarily suspended sales of ReNu with MoistureLoc in those countries. Does that change your response at all if you are Bausch & Lomb?

Reputation Management

Reputations are threatened during any crisis. Research in marketing and public relations has begun to explore how crisis response strategies can be used to protect a reputation during a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2004, 2005; Dean, 2004). The belief is that communication (words and actions) affects how stakeholders perceive the organization in crisis (Allen & Caillouet, 1994; Benoit, 1995, 1997; Hearit, 1994, 1996, 2001). A variety of crisis response strategies have been identified by researchers (e.g., Allen & Caillouet, 1994; Benoit, 1995). The crisis situation is recognized as an important influence in the selection of strategies (Benson, 1988; Bradford & Garrett, 1995; Coombs, 1995; Hobbs, 1995). The key is knowing when to use a particular strategy; the problem has been understanding when to use a particular strategy for a specific crisis situation. Attribution theory has been offered as a useful framework for fitting the crisis response to the crisis situation (e.g., Bradford & Garrett, 1995; Coombs, 1995, 2004b; Dean, 2004).

The Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is part of a growing body of research that applies attribution theory to crisis management (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, & Unnava, 2000; Dawar & Pillutla, 2000; Dean, 2004; Folkes, Koletsky, & Graham, 1987; Härtel, McColl-Kennedy, & McDonald, 1998). In public relations, the SCCT has used attribution theory to develop and test a set of recommendations for using crisis response strategies. Attribution theory is based on the belief that people assign responsibility for negative, unexpected events (Weiner, 1986). Clearly, crises are unexpected and negative, so they provoke attributions of responsibility. In turn, these attributions shape how a stakeholder feels and behaves toward the organization. SCCT utilizes attribution theory to evaluate the reputational threat posed by the crisis situation and then recommends crisis response strategies based on the reputational threat level.

To appreciate the SCCT recommendations, we need to define a set of crisis response strategies and explain how the reputational threat posed by a crisis is assessed.

CRISIS RESPONSE STRATEGIES

Crisis response strategies represent the actual responses an organization uses to address a

crisis. As has been mentioned, communication has both verbal and nonverbal aspects. Hence, crisis response strategies involve the words (verbal aspects) and actions (nonverbal aspects) the organization directs toward the crisis (Allen & Caillouet, 1994; Benoit, 1995).

Crisis response strategies were first examined as apologia or the use of communication to defend one's reputation from public attack (Ware & Linkugel, 1973). Since crises threaten reputations, it was believed that organizations would use apologia to defend their reputations (Dionisopolous & Vibbert, 1988). A number of crisis critics have applied the apologia strategies or stances to understand how organizations defend their reputations during a crisis (Hearit, 1994, 1996, 2001, 2006; Hobbs, 1995; Ice, 1991).

But apologia offered a rather limited number of crisis response strategies, and a belief grew that strategies other than those found in apologia were being used in crisis responses. The number of strategies was expanded by examining the concept of *accounts.* Accounts are statements people use to explain their behavior when that behavior is called into question. A crisis response can be a form of account. Similar to apologia, accounts involve protecting one's reputation from a threat (Benoit, 1995).

Benoit (1995, 1997) has developed a list of 14 *image restoration strategies* based on apologia and account research. Allen and Caillouet (1994) used impression management and accounts to develop a list of 20 *impression management strategies* that an organization might use. Impression management is based on the idea that communication can be used to strategically shape the public reputation of an organization. Organizations use the impression management strategies, what I term *crisis response strategies,* to repair reputational damage from a crisis.

Trying to specify the exact number of crisis response strategies is a losing proposition (Benoit, 1995). A more productive approach is to identify the most common strategies and to organize them in some useful fashion. Table 8.1 offers a list of 10 common crisis communication strategies that was derived by selecting those that appeared on two or more lists developed by crisis experts.

Table 8.1 Crisis Response Strategies, by Posture

	Denial Posture
Attacking the Accuser	The crisis manager confronts the person or group that claims that a crisis exists. The response may include a threat to use force (e.g., a lawsuit) against the accuser.
Denial	The crisis manager states that no crisis exists. The response may include explaining why there is no crisis.
Scapegoating	Some other person or group outside of the organization is blamed for the crisis.
	Diminishment Posture
Excusing	The crisis manager tries to minimize the organization's responsibility for the crisis. The response can include denying any intention to do harm or claiming that the organization had no control of the events that led to the crisis.
Justification	The crisis manager tries to minimize the perceived damage associated with the crisis. The response can include stating that there were no serious damages or injuries or claiming that the victims deserved what they received.
	Rebuilding Posture
Compensation	The organization provides money or other gifts to the victims.
Apology	The crisis manager publicly states that the organization takes full responsibility for the crisis and asks forgiveness.
	Bolstering Posture
Reminding	The organization tells stakeholders about its past good works.
Ingratiation	The organization praises stakeholders.
Victimage	The organization explains how it too is a victim of the crisis.

SCCT organizes crisis response strategies by determining whether the intent of the strategy is to change perceptions of the crisis or of the organization in crisis. As shown in Table 8.1, the strategies have been grouped into four postures, clusters of strategies that stakeholders perceive as similar to one another (Coombs, 2006b). The denial strategies seek to remove any connection between the crisis and the organization. An organization will not be affected by a crisis if it is not involved in or responsible for the crisis. The denial posture involves attacking the accuser, denial, and scapegoating strategies. Box 8.2 provides an extended discussion of the denial strategy.

BOX 8.2 THE DANGERS OF DENIAL

Denial does have a place in crisis communication. There are times when an organization is linked to a crisis but really has no connection to the crisis. Rumors are an obvious example, when false information is being spread about an organization. Another situation would be when a crisis in one organization is attributed to the entire industry, what we can term *sector sprawl* crises. This occurs when stakeholders believe a crisis affects an entire sector/industry when it is only one or a few organizations within that sector. Consider how Salmonella contamination from one farm in Colorado in 2012 resulted in the mass avoidance of cantaloupe in the United States.

Or how a recall of only peanut paste in 2011 resulted in nearly 75% of U.S. consumers thinking major peanut butter brands had been recalled. In each case, organizations rightfully denied their involvement in the crises.

However, denial is the most dangerous crisis response strategy. If an organization denies but then is found to have some responsibility for a crisis, the damage done to the organization is intensified (P. H. Kim, Ferrin, Copper, & Dirks, 2004). Unfortunately, managers often take a "legal" approach to a crisis (Fitzpatrick & Rubin, 1995) and deny. The motivation is to prevent any damage from the crisis from harming the organization. The unintended consequence is a "double crisis." A double crisis occurs when the crisis response creates a more damaging situation than the initial crisis (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010a). Denial followed by a later admission of some responsibility is the primary cause of double crises (Grebe, 2013). Crisis managers should avoid using denial if there is any chance the organization has some responsibility for the crisis.

Scapegoating is a form of denial. In scapegoating, an organization blames some person, group, or organization for the crisis. For example, a fast food chain might blame its meat supplier if its chicken is linked to a Salmonella outbreak or a toy company blames a supplier for using the lead paint that was found on a toy. The examples illustrate how companies can blame their suppliers for the problem that created the crisis. Scapegoating is very ineffective if the organization wants to protect its reputation. Stakeholders feel the organization whose name is on the product or service ultimately is responsible for that product or service. If the problem comes from the supplier, the organization is the one responsible for contracting with the supplier and monitoring the quality of what is being supplied to the organization. The result is that stakeholders react negatively to scapegoating even when there is clear evidence the problem can be traced to a supplier. Scapegoating tries to avoid responsibility, and effort to shift the blame is ineffective in a crisis.

The diminishment strategies attempt to reduce attributions of organizational control over the crisis or the negative effects of the crisis. If the attributions for control of the crisis are viewed less negatively, the reputational threat to the organization is reduced. The diminishment posture consists of excusing and justification strategies.

The rebuilding strategies try to improve the organization's reputation. The words said and actions taken are designed to benefit stakeholders and to offset the negative effects of the crisis. The rebuilding posture involves compensation and apology. Apology is a complicated response, so Box 8.3 provides additional details. The denial, diminishment, and rebuilding postures also represent varying degrees of accommodation, the amount of concern the response shows for victims. This reflects the amount of responsibility an organization is perceived to have accepted for the crisis (Coombs, 2006b). Table 8.2

provides advice on utility of the various crisis response strategies.

Table 8.2 Guidance for Using Crisis Response Strategies

Crisis Response Strategy	Asset for Crisis Communication	Liability for Crisis Communication	Most Appropriate Situation
Attacking the accuser	Refutes claims that a crisis exists	Builds sympathy for attacker Offends victims	Rumor crisis
Denial	Refutes claims that a crisis exists	Offends victims	Rumor crisis
Scapegoating	Eliminates responsibility for a crisis	Angers victims and nonvictims	Should be avoided
Excusing	Reinforces minimal responsibility for the crisis	Angers victims and nonvictims	Crises with low levels of crisis responsibility
Justification	Reinforces minimal damage from the crisis	Angers victims and nonvictims	Crises with low levels of crisis responsibility
Compensation	Indicates organization is taking responsibility for the crisis	Increases expense for the organization	Any crisis with visible victims
Apology	Organization accepts responsibility for the crisis	Increases expense for the organization	Any crisis where there is evidence that the organization is the primary actor responsible for the crisis
Reminding	Adds positive information about the organization	Victims and nonvictims may view it as an attempt to distract from the crisis	When an organization has a favorable prior reputation
Ingratiation	Adds positive information about the organization	Victims and nonvictims may view it as an attempt to distract from the crisis	Any crisis that involves help from outside actors
Victimage	Builds sympathy for the organization	Victims and nonvictims may view it as an attempt to distract from the crisis	Product tampering, hacking, workplace violence, and natural disaster crises

BOX 8.3 THE APOLOGY

Apology is the most complex and perhaps controversial of the crisis response

strategies. It is critical to differentiate between full and partial apologies. A full apology must acknowledge the crisis, accept responsibility, include a promise not to repeat the crisis, and express concern and regret (Kellerman, 2006). A partial apology is typically just an expression of concern and regret. Why the split? The answer is legal liability. Accepting responsibility results in organizations losing lawsuits related to the crisis. If an organization says it is responsible, it must pay in court. As noted earlier, the expression of concern or regret does not carry the same liabilities (Cohen, 2002). A person must be careful when using the term *apology*. That is why full apology is specified and treated as separate from an expression of concern.

An apology is valued because it recognizes social rules were violated, gives respect to victims, and begins to restore the relationships between the organization and the victims of the crisis (De Cremer et al., 2011). But apologies can have a downside as well. An apology accepts responsibility. By accepting responsibility, the damage from the crisis can intensify negative views of the organization in crisis (Kampf, 2009; P. H. Kim et al., 2004). Or, if the apology is judged as insincere, it will increase distrust and anger among stakeholders (De Cremer et al., 2011). Finally, if an organization apologizes for a crisis and is later found not to be responsible for the crisis, that apology can hurt the organization rather than help it (P. H. Kim et al., 2004). All this research suggests that crisis managers should not view apology as the solution to every crisis and to think that an apology automatically yields benefits.

Many organizations use non-apologies that mimic apologies. A non-apology looks like an apology but does not take responsibility for a crisis. An example would be an expression of regret about the crisis or an expression of sympathy for crisis victims. Other non-apologies that can be used when the crisis is reputation-based include indicating no one should be offended by the situation, apologizing for the emotional harm and anger but not the act, apologizing for a poorly worded message but not the content or intention of the message, and apologizing to anyone who might have been offended by the situation (Kampf, 2009). Stakeholders often accept these non-apologies as true apologies. The organization received the benefits of the apology without having to take the risk if accepting responsibility for the crisis. Of course the danger is that stakeholders will recognize the lack of sincerity and react negatively to the non-apology (Kampf, 2009). Crisis managers need to weigh the risks and benefits of using a non-apology in place of an apology. For many crises that involve minor reputational threats and not threats to public safety, which includes many social media crises, non-apologies might be a viable option.

We should consider one final point with apologies, whether a crisis is competence or integrity based. A competence-based crisis is when a crisis results from a lack of technical competence (P. H. Kim et al., 2004). An example would be a chemical release cause when employees mishandle the chemical. Research has found that apologies are ideally suited for competence-based crises. People need to know the

organization has realized its mistake (incompetence) and an apology recognizes the organization's mistake. An apology can intensify negative feelings when the crisis is integrity-based. The apology proves the organization's lack of integrity and that can further damage the organization's reputation (P. H. Kim et al., 2004). Non-apologies, such as expressions of regret and even compensation, might work just as well as an apology in an integrity-based crisis. Crisis managers might conclude that they should never apologize when the crisis in integrity-based. However, if an organization is responsible, an apology is unlikely to do further harm to the organization.

Crisis communicators need to consider any organizational constraints that would prevent the use of apologies. There can be legal and financial constraints on an organization. An apology is an admission of guilt. If lawsuits are filed as a result of the crisis, the legal department will recommend against an apology. Moreover, management must determine if they can absorb the financial cost of an apology. After accepting guilt, the next step is to settle with the victims. An organization will have to pay damages to victims if it publically accepts responsibility (Tyler, 1997). Merck set aside almost $6 billion over 3 years to help cover the costs of their VIOXX product harm crisis (*Merck to Pay $4.9 Billion,* 2007). Merck created a fund of over $600 million just for the company's legal fees (Foley, 2005). Managers need to determine whether they have enough financial reserves to absorb the costs of an apology.

The bolstering strategies are supplemental to the other three postures. They also seek to build a positive connection between the organization and the stakeholders. This posture comprises the reminding, ingratiation, and victimage strategies. These three focus on the organization, so they would seem rather egocentric if used alone, which is why they are considered supplemental. We should assume crisis managers will not use just one crisis response strategy. Within limits, crisis response strategies can be used in a variety of combinations. Clearly, this is the case with bolstering since it is a supplemental strategy. The limit is combining denial with either diminishment or rebuilding because that creates contradictions. Denial argues that there is no crisis, while diminishment and rebuilding accept that there is a crisis.

Evaluating Reputational Threat

Three factors are used in SCCT to evaluate the reputational threat presented by a crisis: crisis type, crisis history, and prior reputation. These factors are applied in a two-step process. The first step is to determine the crisis type, the frame that is used to interpret the crisis (see Chapter 5 to review the list of crisis types or frames used in SCCT). Research has found that each crisis type creates predictable attributions of crisis responsibility among stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). Table 8.3 organizes the frames according to the

levels of crisis responsibility they evoke. The victim cluster produces very little crisis responsibility for the organization. Stakeholders see the organization as a victim of the crisis, not the cause of the crisis. The accident cluster produces low attributions of organizational crisis responsibility. The crises are seen as largely uncontrollable by the organization and unintentional. (While a challenge crisis is in the accidental crisis, refer to Chapter 2 for guidance on how to communicate in a challenge crisis.) The preventable cluster produces very strong attributions of organizational crisis responsibility. The organization willfully engaged in behaviors that led to the crisis (Coombs, 2005; Coombs & Holladay, 2001).

Table 8.3 Crisis Types, by Level of Responsibility

Victim Cluster: Very little attribution of crisis responsibility
Natural disasters
Rumors
Workplace violence
Malevolence
Accidental Cluster: Low attribution of crisis responsibility
Challenges
Technical-error accidents
Technical-error product harm
Preventable Cluster: Strong attributions of crisis responsibility
Human-error accidents
Human-error product harm
Organizational misdeeds

Crisis responsibility can be a threat to an organization's reputation because stronger attributions of crisis responsibility produce greater reputational damage (Coombs, 2004a; Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2004). To determine the crisis type, look to see what cues are present and being used to describe the crisis. Most crises will fall easily into one of the types. If the crisis type is ambiguous, the crisis team can attempt to shape which frame is selected. However, it is possible that the crisis team and stakeholders may disagree on the crisis type. If this is the case, the crisis team should seriously consider adopting the stakeholders' frame.

The second step in assessing the reputational threat is to modify the initial assessment based on crisis history and prior reputation. If an organization has had similar crises in the past, the current crisis will be a much greater reputational threat (Coombs, 2004b; Coombs & Holladay, 2004). The crisis history compounding the threat of the current crisis is known as the *Velcro effect:* Organizations with a history of crises attract additional reputational damage just as Velcro attracts lint (Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Klein &

Dawar, 2004). Similarly, an unfavorable prior reputation intensifies the reputational threat as well (Coombs & Holladay, 2006). So what does this really mean? If an organization has a history of crises or a negative prior reputation, stakeholders will treat a victim crisis like an accidental crisis and an accidental crisis like an intentional one. In turn, crisis managers must adjust which crisis response strategies to use (Coombs, 2006a; Coombs & Holladay, 2002).

Once the reputational threat is assessed, the crisis team selects the recommended crisis response strategy. SCCT posits that as the reputational threat increases, crisis teams should use more accommodative strategies. Research using nonvictim stakeholders has found support for the SCCT-recommended strategies (Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2004). Table 8.4 lists the crisis response recommendations from SCCT.

It is important to understand how stakeholders perceive crises and crisis response strategies. SCCT takes an audience-centered approach to crisis communication, considering how stakeholders react to the crisis situation and crisis response strategies. SCCT goes far beyond the typical case study approach to crisis communication that many feel has limited the field's development (Ahluwalia et al., 2000; Coombs & Schmidt, 2000).

With the threat to lives and property presented by a crisis, a focus on reputation may seem shallow. SCCT acknowledges that people are the first priority in a crisis. Only after instructing and adjusting information is provided should crisis managers turn their attention to reputation concerns. Reputation protection is a valuable aspect of crisis communication. Organizations invest a substantial amount of money and effort into building reputations.

Effects of Credibility and Prior Reputation on Crisis Response Strategies

Two additional points must be considered when discussing the crisis response strategies because they affect their use: credibility and prior reputation. As noted previously, credibility is composed of expertise and trustworthiness. Expertise is the organization's knowledge about the subject. An expert organization will appear to be competent, capable, and effective (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Trustworthiness is the organization's goodwill toward or concern for its stakeholders. A trustworthy organization is truthful and ethical and considers how its actions will affect its stakeholders (Allen & Caillouet, 1994; Kouzes & Posner, 1993).

Table 8.4 Situational Crisis Communication Theory Recommendations for Crisis Response Selection

1. Provide instructing information to all victims or potential victims in the form of warnings and directions for protecting themselves from harm.
2. Provide adjusting information to victims by expressing concern for them and providing corrective action when possible.
   Note: Providing instructing and adjusting information is enough of a response for victim crises in an organization with no crisis history or unfavorable prior reputation.
3. Use diminishment strategies for accident crises when there is no crisis history or unfavorable prior reputation.
4. Use diminishment strategies for victim crises when there is a crisis history or unfavorable prior reputation.
5. Use rebuilding strategies for accident crises when there is a crisis history or unfavorable prior reputation.
6. Use rebuilding strategies for any preventable crisis.
7. Use denial strategies in rumor crises.
8. Use denial strategies in challenges when the challenge is unwarranted.
9. Use corrective action (adjusting information) in challenges when other stakeholders are likely to support the challenge.
10. Use reinforcing strategies as supplements to the other response strategies.
11. The victimage response strategy should be used only with the victim cluster.
12. To be consistent, do not mix denial strategies with either diminishment or rebuilding strategies.
13. Diminishment and rebuilding strategies can be used in combination with one another.

Although not referred to directly, credibility is an underlying theme in much of the crisis management literature. Two common refrains noted by crisis experts are that an organization must (1) establish control during a crisis and (2) show compassion during a crisis (e.g., Carney & Jorden, 1993; Frank, 1994; Sen & Egelhoff, 1991). When examining what is meant by control and compassion, a strong similarity is found with the expertise and trustworthiness dimensions of credibility. Control includes having accurate and complete information about the crisis (Bergman, 1994; Caruba, 1994; Kempner, 1995). Having such information shows that the organization is an expert about the crisis. Compassion means showing concern and sensitivity for those affected by the crisis (Higbee, 1992; T. H. Mitchell, 1986), which is consistent with trustworthiness. People trust an organization that seems to have their best interests in mind. Thus, crisis experts have indirectly argued the importance of credibility during crisis management.

Believability is essential during any type of crisis event because there always can be competing interpretations. For this reason, crisis experts repeatedly emphasize that an organization must get its side of the story or version of the crisis out quickly (e.g., Heath, 1994; Kempner, 1995). However, this advice has a hidden premise—it is assumed that stakeholders will believe what the organization says. The importance of believability is

heightened when the crisis hinges on the stakeholders choosing between competing versions of the crisis story. In some crises, the accepted version will determine the success of the crisis management effort and affect the amount of damage inflicted by the crisis. Challenges and rumors are two types of crises that rest on the selection of competing crisis stories (Lerbinger, 1997). A closer look at challenges and rumors will clarify the importance of credibility to crisis management.

A challenge occurs when a stakeholder calls an organization's actions into question. The stakeholder claims that the organization is acting in ways that are inappropriate. Other stakeholders must decide whether to accept the claim of wrongdoing or to accept the organization's claim that its actions are appropriate (Lerbinger, 1997). Challenges are marked by ambiguity; there are some reasons why both sides may be correct. The ambiguity stems from the challenges being based on either morals or questions of product or service quality. A moral challenge is tied to some set of moral principles, such as a code of conduct. The U.N. Global Compact that recommends universal social and environment principles for companies is an example of such a code. A moral challenge does not involve the violation of any law or regulation. What is violated is a set of standards some stakeholders believe the organization should adhere to. Some examples include not buying fur because of the inhumane treatment of animals or not buying oil from Nigeria because of the Nigerian government's human rights abuses. The potential for a moral challenge is great since the world is composed of many diverse groups with conflicting views of appropriate conduct. During a moral challenge, stakeholders support the side that is the most believable or credible to them.

A challenge related to the quality of a product or service derives its ambiguity from how the data that measure quality are interpreted or from competing data sets that lead to different conclusions about the product or service quality. The Audi 5000 sudden-acceleration case exemplifies the ambiguity that can be associated with interpreting quality data. For a number of years, Audi 5000 drivers reported that the car would suddenly jump into gear and run. Sometimes there were deadly consequences, when people were unlucky enough to be in a vehicle's path at the time of the jump. Many customers defined the situation as a quality problem, a fault in the design of the Audi 5000's transmission system. Audi maintained that there was no reliable evidence that the transmission was faulty. Instead, Audi blamed the incidents on bad drivers. No definitive evidence supported either story; it all depended on how one interpreted the events. Eventually there were five recalls related to the 5000, but the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) agreed with Audi that the sudden acceleration was related to driver error. Some scientists even questioned the accuracies of the NTSB report (Wathen, 1987).

Throughout the process Audi maintained there was no problem, but stakeholders, including potential car buyers, found the Audi customers to have the more believable and credible story (Versical, 1987). Audi sales and resale prices plummeted. Lawsuits were filed, and the actions of the Audi Victims Network produced a steady stream of negative

publicity. Audi came to regret its initial statement of driver error. Audi General Sales Manager James G. Wolter later said, "We started saying it was driver error. If there is anything we wish we could recall, it's the statement 'driver error'" (quoted in Wathen, 1987, "NTSA and Audi," para. 5). Even with government support, Audi lost the battle for public opinion. Ultimately, challenges based on quality are resolved by stakeholders selecting the story they feel comes from the most credible source and acting accordingly.

Rumors represent another form of crisis in which believability is essential. A rumor occurs when an untruthful statement about an organization is circulated. Since 2004, Starbucks has been fighting a rumor that it does not support U.S. and British troops. Marine Sergeant Howard C. Wright was the original source of the rumor. He had sent e-mails to friends saying Starbucks did not support the war. Starbucks reached out him and explained the real situation. He then sent out e-mails correcting his mistake, but the rumor had already infected the Internet. In 2012, Starbucks issued an update to the rumor control, again stating that the rumor was false and noting how Starbucks works with the Red Cross and the USO to provide coffee for the troops. Starbucks had devoted considerable time and resources to fighting the rumor (Starbucks, 2012). Rumor experts recommend that organizations respond immediately to rumors by stating that the information is untrue and unjust (Gross, 1990). Once more, a premium is placed on the credibility and believability of the organization. Defusing a rumor requires that the organization be perceived as a credible channel of information—the stakeholders must believe that the organization is a source of accurate information. The organization must be more credible than the rumor.

The benefit of credibility is that it increases the believability of an organization's message. The more credible the organization, the more likely stakeholders are to believe and to accept the organization's definition of the crisis, to believe the organization's side of the story. A second characteristic of a favorable precrisis organization-stakeholder relationship would be stakeholders viewing the organization as credible.

An organization's reputation overlaps with credibility but is considered a separate construct. An organization's prior reputation can be likened to a bank account—an organizational bank that contains reputational capital. A favorable reputation builds up the account, while a crisis subtracts from the account. Under certain limited circumstances (Coombs & Holladay, 2006), a favorable reputation can act as a shield to protect an organization from harm. In most cases, however, a crisis will inflict reputational damage, the loss of reputational capital.

An organization with a favorable reputation can experience stakeholders ignoring bad news about the organization because they are unlikely to believe that a good organization did anything bad. Crises can be one of the forms of bad news that is deflected by a strong reputation. The disbelief gives the organization the benefit of the doubt during the initial phases of a crisis, which provides two advantages. First, it supplies a buffer against people assuming the worst. In a crisis, the worst is when stakeholders believe the organization is

responsible for the crisis. A strong account suffers less from the withdrawals of a crisis. Second, a favorable precrisis reputation means that an organization has reputational capital to spend, unlike those that are unknown or disliked.

While most people are quick to believe the worst about organizations, a favorable reputation can lead stakeholders to believe the best. In turn, this means the stakeholders would not jump to negative conclusions about the crisis. This position would be reevaluated once the facts about the crisis begin to emerge. A favorable reputation may also afford protection from the negative speculation that crises often produce. Negative speculation refers to the nonexpert opinions that often fill the information void created by a crisis. Organizations are wise to respond immediately to prevent this void from developing. However, negative speculation may come more quickly than the facts during a crisis (Carney & Jorden, 1993). The negative speculation feeds into people's willingness to assume the worst about organizations, particularly corporations. A favorable reputation counters the negative speculation and the willingness to believe the worst. A favorable reputation should lead stakeholders to discount the negative speculation and to believe the best about an organization until that belief is proven to be unfounded. The stakeholders are predisposed to wait to hear the organization's side of the story before drawing conclusions about the crisis. A strong, favorable precrisis organization-stakeholder relationship shields the organization from undue reputational harm and makes it easier for the organization to deliver its side of the story.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONSIDERATIONS

As we consider the crisis response, the channels used to deliver it become more complicated with the expanding social media channels. Crisis managers have historically used the news media, advertising (primarily newspapers), and websites to deliver the crisis response to stakeholders. News releases and press conferences attempt to infuse the organization's side of the crisis (crisis response) into the news coverage. The news media often ignore these influence efforts (Holladay, 2009). Advertising and websites allow crisis managers to directly state the crisis response. Newspapers have been a frequent channel for delivering apologies to stakeholders. This happened with Exxon during the Valdez crisis and with the CEO of Facebook during the privacy crisis of 2010. Websites allow for posting of crisis responses either in news releases or as special messages. When Taco John's had an E. coli outbreak in 2006, the company placed its crisis response messages on its corporate website. There is an evolving expectation that websites will be a part of the crisis response delivery system (Caldiero, Taylor, & Ungureanu, 2010; Taylor & Kent, 2007). Combined, we can call the news media, advertising, and websites the traditional crisis communication channels.

The delivery channel decision is more complex today because there are more options as well as pressure from "experts" to use social media. It is important to remember that social media is a mix of channels, and some are more relevant than others depending on the crisis

situation, including the nature of the crisis, the target stakeholders, and the crisis response message. As noted in Chapter 4, message mapping includes considering the most effective channels for distributing the crisis message. If the target stakeholders are unlikely to be utilizing social media, it is not a useful option. But if the crisis is transpiring in social media, it has to be part of the mix. The strategic application of social media requires a coordination of the demands of the crisis situation and the possible contributions of the specific social media channel.

An important crisis aspect to consider when using social media is who is at risk. A crisis can place stakeholders and the organization at risk. However, crises can be divided between those that focus on the risk to stakeholders and those that focus on the risk to the organization. As noted earlier, stakeholder safety is the number-one priority in a crisis. Natural disasters, product tampering, workplace violence, product harm, and accidents all create risks that can spread among stakeholders. In each crisis, there is specific instructing information that can help prevent injury to stakeholders. An organization needs to make stakeholders aware of the risk and the requisite protective actions. For instance, consumers need to know which peanut butter has salmonella and what they should do if they have a jar of it. Awareness of a crisis should trigger a search for crisis-related information by the stakeholders at risk. Refer back to the CPSC's use of social media for delivering instructing information as an illustration of this point. A perfect example is how Twitter has been used during natural disasters such as the San Diego wildfires and the H1N1 flu outbreak in 2009. The Centers for Disease Control saw its Twitter followers go from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands after the news media created awareness of the H1N1 risk.

Social media is audience driven. People have to visit sites or become followers to access the information. Today, social media is a natural part of the search when people require information such as how to protect themselves from a crisis risk. Microblogs, blogs, content communities, discussion boards, and social networking sites are logical places for instructing information (part of the crisis response) when the emphasis is on the risk to stakeholders. A word of warning is important here. Being part of social media can create an expectation for interaction. Crisis managers must ensure that they have the resources to deal with the additional requests for information that might flow in once stakeholders access the organization's crisis response. Social media can tax the crisis manager's ability to appear to be open and transparent if the crisis team cannot meet the information requests generated by social media. Social media also increases the possibility of multiple voices communicating about the crisis.

Even if various people speaking for an organization are consistent, there are still multiple voices—different people or groups talking about the crisis (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010b). As noted earlier, government officials are a common additional voice in a crisis. Social media increases the potential and number of additional crisis voices. There are advantages and disadvantages of these other crisis voices. Stakeholders who support an organization, such as dedicated customers, may come to the aid of an organization in crisis. Theses

supportive stakeholder might post messages praising the organization or repeating key crisis messages presented by the organization. Fans of Carnival on Facebook were very supportive during the Carnival Triumph fire crisis. The crisis voices might be a positive echo on the Internet. The disadvantages are that stakeholders might post negative messages. This can include victims talking about their negative experience in the crisis or any other stakeholder that has a reason to dislike the organization.

Social media monitoring remains essential during the crisis. The crisis team needs to monitor what is being said, the valence of the comments (favorable or unfavorable), and dominant topics being addressed in the crisis. When Amazon had a crisis erupt over its sudden removal of unauthorized George Orwell books from its Kindle network, the social media comments indicated their initial response was received unfavorably and why people disliked the response. Amazon was able to adapt its crisis message and create a message that was accepted by most of its stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2012a).

Rumor and challenge crises are those that emphasize the risk to the organization. Neither of these crises presents a true risk to public safety. The organization is at risk from damage created by the rumor or the challenge to its practices. Social media makes it easier for rumors to spread and for stakeholders to challenge an organization. Note how in Chapter 3 the social media drove the rumor over the danger of Pampers. The American Family Association uses social media in its efforts to have Ford Motor Company stop providing same-sex partner benefits and marketing in gay media—a challenge to Ford's practices. For both rumors and challenges, the stakeholders can initiate the crisis via social media. Crisis managers must be where the action is and respond in the social media where the crisis originated, extend the message to related social media, and use their website as a repository for additional information. Chapter 4 discussed when Greenpeace challenged Nestlé's sourcing of palm oil in a number of social media sources, including Facebook. Greenpeace argued that irresponsible palm oil production was destroying orangutan habitats. Ollie the orangutan created a Facebook page and asked Facebook users to make the page more popular than Nestlé's. Angry stakeholders hijacked Nestlé's Facebook page by posting criticism and condemnations of the company's palm oil sourcing. Experts commenting on the crisis management noted how Nestlé did not use its Facebook page as part of its response (Leonard, 2010). Conversely, Pampers did engage critics on its Facebook page, giving it yet another chance to combat the rumor. Crisis managers must embrace potential interactions with stakeholders as a chance to debunk the rumor and argue for their side of the challenge.

Crises in which the organization is at fault (organizational misdeeds) also create a unique demand. If the organization is at fault, some type of rebuilding is expected by stakeholders. The rebuilding is a type of atonement and can include a full apology, some form of compensation, or both. To stand a chance of being effective, the organization must make its atonement known to stakeholders. Hence, crisis managers should utilize all social media at their disposal. Wherever the organization had a presence prior to the crisis, the crisis

response should appear. Content sites, such as YouTube, and discussion boards could be used even if there was no prior organizational presence. Content sites and discussion boards do not have the same need to cultivate followers and content that you find with microblogs, blogs, and social networking sites. Only the most motivated stakeholders will seek out the atonement crisis response because it is not related to their safety—it lacks an inherently attractive quality. But the chance to reach more people at a low cost should not be ignored. However, once again the organization may have to cope with interaction expectations and be prepared for that potentiality.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Carefree Cruise Line: Act 3

It is 24 hours since the report of a distress call from a ship in one of your sub-brands off the coast of Italy. The intense traditional and online media coverage of the sinking continues. Safety is emerging as a key theme in the media comments. It is reported that the captain waited too long to begin the evacuation and that the safety drill for the passengers had been postponed from the first day of the cruise to the second day of the cruise. The ship sank the first night of the cruise, meaning passengers had little information about how to abandon ship. News media and people posting online, many of whom cruise regularly, are highly critical of the company's safety efforts in this case. Their comments are calling into question the safety of all the ships in your fleet, not just this sub-brand. So comments are questioning the safety of the entire cruise industry. There is a bright spot on your Facebook page: The vast majority of people commenting on your crisis efforts are supportive. Many report how safe they felt on previous cruises and note how concerned your crews seem to be about safety onboard the cruise ships.

- What adjustments might you need to make to your crisis communication messages with the new focus on safety?
- How might the positive comments on Facebook help your organization during the crisis?
- Why might the cruise industry trade association get involved with the crisis, and how might this help your company?

FOLLOW-UP COMMUNICATION

With all the emphasis on initial response, it is easy to overlook the need for follow-up communication with stakeholders. Crisis communication should continue throughout the life cycle of the crisis. Crisis teams must stay in touch with stakeholders. While the initial

response has a mass media emphasis, follow-up communication can be better targeted to individual stakeholders. Better targeting means using the channels best suited to reaching particular stakeholders and tailoring the message to fit their needs (Carney & Jorden, 1993; Clampitt, 1991; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). For instance, major investors may learn about a crisis from the news media. Follow-up communication to investors would center on their primary concern—the financial implications of the crisis—and use either calls or specially printed updates from the investor relations department. The external stakeholder network from the Crisis Knowledge Map Directory is valuable at this point. As noted in Chapter 7, the external stakeholder network will have the necessary contact information and preferred channels for reaching the stakeholders.

In addition to answering new inquiries, follow-up communication involves delivering any promised information and updating stakeholders about new developments. As noted earlier, there are times when crisis managers do not have answers to stakeholder questions and would do best to promise to pass the information along as soon as they receive it (C. J. Stewart & Cash, 1997). It is essential that the crisis team fulfill these promises. The crisis team must report to stakeholders, even if only to say that the information was never found. Credibility and organizational reputation are built on matching words and deeds (Herbig, Milewicz, & Golden, 1994). The crisis managers' words include their promises and their actions fulfill those promises. An organization loses credibility and damages the organization-stakeholder relationships when crisis managers fail to deliver on their information promises.

Updates inform stakeholders about the progress of the crisis management effort. Four pieces of information are crucial to updates. First, let stakeholders know how the recovery effort is progressing. Second, announce the cause of the crisis as soon as it is known, if the cause was not known at the time of the initial message. Third, inform stakeholders of any actions taken to prevent a repeat of the crisis, including when those changes have been implemented. Fourth, report to stakeholders any third-party support your organization is receiving. Third-party support means that outside groups are praising your crisis management efforts or agreeing with your assessment of the situation. Examples include noted crisis experts giving the crisis management effort a positive review in the news media or the government saying the organization's stated cause of the crisis is correct. Supplying these four kinds of information builds the credibility of the organization. Items 1, 2, and 3 reinforce a perception of control, while Item 4 provides added credibility with the endorsement of an outside expert. Social media are a natural channel for follow-up information. If stakeholders are following the crisis through social media, it is very easy for crisis managers to post updates. Social media is meant to facilitate interaction; hence, updating information is simple.

Three final points about follow-up communication must be made. First, the spokesperson and crisis team should continue to field and respond to inquiries throughout the crisis. The crisis team must track and answer all inquiries. This now includes those

made through social media. Second, the spokesperson should continue to express compassion in the follow-up communications. Losing sight of the victims in later messages can call the initial concern into question. Was the organization simply posturing in the news media? The organizational compassion must be real and be reflected in the follow-up communication, which includes both words and actions (Bergman, 1994; T. H. Mitchell, 1986). If aid is promised to victims, make sure it appears. Third, employee assistance programs should continue monitoring and treating negative reactions to the traumatic event. Once more, tracking crisis information is critical. The crisis team should be recording what follow-up actions were promised on the Stakeholder Relations Worksheets. Again, credibility is based on the organization's words matching its actions.

UNIVERSITY APPLICATION: STAKEHOLDERS

Fires are one of the primary risks faced by universities. When you have buildings, they can catch fire. Seton Hall was hit by a deadly dorm fire in the late 1990s, and my own campus had a classroom building fire during class time. In a crisis such as a building fire, who are the likely key stakeholders for your university? Does it matter if the fire is in a dorm or a classroom building? Why or why not? What options does the university have for contacting these stakeholders? What challenges would the university face in trying to communicate with these stakeholders?

CONCLUSION

The actions taken in the crisis response phase are informed by the crisis-related information and knowledge gathered during the crisis recognition phase. The crisis team seeks to contain the damage and to return to business as usual as soon as possible. Communication is essential to limiting the duration of the crisis because it is at the heart of the initial response, reputational management, informing stakeholders, and providing follow-up information. The initial response allows the crisis team to reestablish a sense of organizational control over events and to express compassion for victims. Taking early control of the crisis prevents rumors and speculation from needlessly intensifying the crisis damage. Moreover, the response must be quick and consistent while the organization remains open to communication with stakeholders.

Crisis communication is ideal for combating the reputational damage associated with a crisis. Crisis response strategies affect how stakeholders perceive the crisis and the organization in crisis. In addition, the crisis itself limits the type of strategies that can be used effectively. Crisis managers should select the strategies that fit best with their particular crisis situation. SCCT provides guidelines, not absolute rules, to help crisis managers select the most effective responses for protecting reputational assets in a given crisis situation. The

Business Continuity Plan allows an organization to function during a crisis and to return to business as usual more quickly. Crisis managers must communicate to relevant stakeholders how the continuity plan affects their interaction with the organization. In addition to the initial response, crisis managers have a variety of follow-up information they must communicate to stakeholders, including delivery of previously promised information and updates regarding the progress of the crisis management efforts. The ongoing organization-stakeholder dialogue continues throughout the crisis management process.

Regular, two-way communication between the organization and stakeholders is the lifeblood of a favorable organizational-stakeholder relationship. The dialogue must be maintained during good times and bad. Crises are part of the bad times. Remembering the importance of communicating with stakeholders aids the crisis management team in its efforts to contain and recover from the crisis.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY AND PERSPECTIVE TAKING

Communication is essential to any leader, and crisis leadership is no different. For James and Wooten (2010), crisis leaders need to be willing to communicate, and the ability to shape perceptions (one of the two core functions of crisis communication) is what defines effective communication. This chapter centers on ways to shape perceptions of the organization in crisis. Both the form and content recommendations give insights into how crisis leaders can be effective at shaping perceptions of their organization during a crisis.

An essential element of effective crisis communication is perspective taking. Perspective taking is the ability to see things from the point of view of another person. For crises, perspective refers to the ability of crisis managers to consider the stakeholders' points of view, especially those who are victims of the crisis. The ethical base response and the accommodative crisis response strategies demand that crisis managers understand and empathize with victims and other stakeholders. Psychological reassurance and repair strategies are an empathetic response. Crisis managers that lack empathy will struggle to be effective crisis communicators.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using full apologies during a crisis? Do you think partial apologies have any real value? Why or why not?
2. As a crisis manager, how can you prepare for using instructing and adjusting

information prior to a crisis?

3. Why does attribution theory seem so fitting for crisis communication?
4. What other crisis types would you add to Table 8.3?
5. Why does strategy matter during a crisis? Is there time for strategy?
6. What factors could create a double crisis?

CHAPTER 9

Postcrisis Concerns

Eventually, every crisis comes to an end. The immediate effects of the crisis are passed, and the organization returns to business as usual. However, crisis managers should not feel that their work is completed when the crisis ends. First, it is critical that crisis managers evaluate their efforts. Organizations learn to improve their crisis management through evaluation. Second, crises must still be monitored after they are resolved. Monitoring might involve cooperating in continuing investigations or supplying necessary updated information to stakeholders.

This chapter begins by examining the role of evaluation in crisis management learning. The evaluation efforts link back to earlier crisis management steps, thus reflecting the ongoing nature of crisis management. Evaluation is the key to improvement. One way to improve the crisis management process is by learning what the organization did right or wrong during a crisis. Evaluation yields insights that should be treated as crisis management lessons. Because lessons should be remembered, the idea of institutional or organizational memory is discussed after evaluation. The chapter ends by reviewing the follow-up activities a crisis manager may need to perform and how postcrisis actions naturally lead back to crisis preparation.

CRISIS EVALUATION

An actual crisis is a "tremendous opportunity for learning" (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992, p. 158). Learning is accomplished through evaluation of the crisis management efforts in two distinct ways. First, how the organization dealt with the crisis, its crisis management performance, is evaluated, examining the efficacy of the crisis management plan (CMP) and its execution (Barton, 2001). The crisis team carefully examines all phases of its performance. Second, the crisis impact is evaluated; a review of the actual damage created by the crisis is conducted (Sen & Egelhoff, 1991). A natural link exists between the two forms of evaluation. The actual crisis damage should be less than the anticipated crisis damage if the crisis management efforts were effective. Thus, damage assessments provide a tangible indicator of crisis management success or failure.

Crisis Management Performance Evaluation

Crisis management performance is primarily a function of the quality of the CMP and the crisis team's ability to make it work. Failure could result from an ineffectual CMP, poor execution of the CMP, or both (Mitroff, Harrington, & Gai, 1996). An organization must understand the source of failure or success if it is to learn from either. What lessons are learned if the organization does not know what it did well or poorly? Moreover, there are certain structural features (e.g., technology, infrastructure) that can facilitate or inhibit crisis performance (Mitroff et al., 1996). All facets of the crisis management performance must be assessed to determine strengths and weaknesses.

Data Collection

Data collection is the first step in any evaluation process. Evaluation data comes from crisis records, stakeholder feedback, organizational performance measures, Internet comments, and media coverage. The various crisis records document vital information, such as the notification process, the collection and processing of information, the receiving and answering of stakeholder queries, the crisis-related messages sent by the organization, and significant decisions and actions taken by the crisis management team (CMT). The primary sources of crisis documentation are the Incident Report Sheets, the CMT Strategy Worksheets, the Stakeholder Contact Worksheets, and the Information Log Sheets. The crisis records should be reviewed to determine if there were any noticeable mistakes made by the CMT. For example, was important information not processed, were stakeholder queries ignored, or were inappropriate messages sent to stakeholders? Again, administrative help during the crisis is essential in completing the paperwork that is used in the postcrisis analysis.

All stakeholder groups involved in the crisis can be asked for feedback, including employees and external stakeholders. The feedback can be collected by structured surveys, interviews, or focus groups. Simple surveys seem to be the most effective method. They minimize the time demands placed on the stakeholders and ensure that the evaluators receive the information they want. Typical questions on such a survey include the person's role in the crisis, level of satisfaction with and ways to improve notification, comments on specific strengths or weaknesses in the crisis management performance, and suggestions for improving the CMP (Barton, 2001). Different evaluation forms are required for the crisis team members, employees, and external stakeholders because the three groups have different connections to the crisis management process. Obviously, it is more difficult to secure the cooperation of external stakeholders, but every effort must be made to gather data that will provide a holistic picture of the crisis management performance. Media coverage and Internet comments are two other types of stakeholder feedback. The CMT should collect these types of information about the crisis. The CMT may choose to hire an independent consulting firm to collect the crisis performance data.

Given the growing importance of Internet communication, we should quickly return to the idea of social media monitoring discussed in Chapter 4. Managers can collect their own online messages using free services such as Google Alerts, Uniliyzer, Trendspottr, or Social

Mention. The other option is to pay one of the many companies that provide online message tracking, such as Collective Intellect, Sysomos, Attensity, Crimson Hexagon, Sprial16, hootsuite, Trackur, and Viral Heat. A company such as Vocus will collect traditional news media coverage and integrate it with the social media data. Many of the online monitoring firms, such as Viral Heat, mention their utility for crisis communication. Trackur even offers crisis insurance called CrisisShield (Beal, 2013). The Internet changes rapidly, so these exact services or companies may no longer exist when you read this text. The point is that organizations can conduct their own online monitoring or pay a company for the service in order to collect data to help with the evaluation of the crisis communication and crisis management efforts.

Organizing and Analyzing the Crisis Management Performance Data

Once collected, the data must be organized for the analysis. A danger in evaluation is not performing a specific analysis. For crisis management, an overall "good" or "poor" performance evaluation would be too general. Specificity is the key to useful evaluation. Specify in detail what was done well and done poorly. The specifics tell organization evaluators what changes need to be made and what must be retained. Mitroff et al. (1996) provide a number of helpful suggestions for organizing and analyzing crisis evaluation data. They suggest using four major crisis variables: crisis type, crisis phases, systems, and stakeholders. These variables divide the evaluation data into small, discernible units. Crisis managers can target strengths and weaknesses more precisely when data are divided. The value of Mitroff and colleagues' approach becomes clearer when the application of the specific crisis variables is considered.

Organizations face many different types of crises. Crisis teams may not handle all crises equally well. Crisis managers should compare evaluations from different crisis types to ascertain if there are patterns of strengths and weaknesses that are crisis specific (Mitroff et al., 1996; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Categorizing evaluations by crisis type permits cross-comparisons, which is one form of analysis.

As discussed earlier, crises move through distinct phases. Crisis management has been organized around three phases, with each having subphases. Crisis teams may handle the phases and subphases with different degrees of success and failure. For instance, a team may be adept at finding information but have problems articulating the organizational crisis response. Dividing the crisis evaluation data by crisis phases and subphases can help identify if the crisis team or CMP (or both) is weak in a particular part of the cycle. The crisis team could work on the skills associated with that segment, and the CMP could be revised to improve preparation for that target. Only by dividing evaluation data according to phases and subphases can the analysis reveal these types of specific strengths and weaknesses.

Systems include technology, human factors, infrastructure, culture, and emotions and beliefs. Technical systems organize the company's work and would include specific tasks

along with the tools and materials necessary to complete them. Evaluators might ask, "Was the CMT hampered by lack of technical system support for crisis management?" The human factor system is the integration of people and machinery. It examines the fit between people and technology. Evaluators might ask, "Were the crisis management problems a function of a poor match between people and technology?"

Infrastructure refers to the connection of the crisis management team to the functioning of the organization. A permanent CMT should exist and be integrated into the operation of the organization. Some organizations may choose to use software designed to organize and facilitate the flow of crisis communication. One such program is Public Information & Emergency Response (PIER). A human factors evaluation would examine the fit between PIER and the crisis team. Evaluators might ask, "Did the CMT fail because it is not considered a functioning part of the organization?"

The cultural system refers to the extent to which the organization is oriented toward crisis preparation. Evaluators might ask, "Were the problems a function of cultural constraints, such as suppressing bad news?" Last, the emotional and belief system represents the dominant coalition's mindset about crisis management. Evaluators might ask, "Did the crisis management effort fail because the dominant coalition does not support crisis preparation or the crisis response?" The examination of system-specific concerns helps to determine if the crisis management performance might have been a function of structural factors rather than the CMP or the CMT (Mitroff et al., 1996).

The system variables reflect the ongoing nature of crisis management as well, since the evaluation of system variables is most appropriate during the preparation phase. An organization can and should identify system flaws before a crisis hits. However, sometimes the flaws are hidden and do not surface until an actual crisis occurs. For example, the dominant coalition may espouse support for crisis management until there is a crisis. Then the support may evaporate. Or the stress of the crisis management process may create unexpected problems in how people utilize technology.

Reactions from all stakeholders affected by the particular crisis are useful for a thorough evaluation. How did they feel about the crisis management performance? The only way to assess stakeholder reactions is to ask for them. A cardinal rule in evaluation is to not assume you know how people feel about a message or action. By considering each stakeholder separately, an organization can determine specific strengths and weaknesses. Evaluators can determine which actions were effective or ineffective for specific stakeholder groups. For example, investors might be happy with the crisis-related information given and how they received it, while the community may be disappointed with how they received their information. Specific stakeholder reactions also will indicate which parts of the stakeholder network are effective or ineffective during crisis management.

Regardless of how the data are divided, the key is to identify the specific strengths and weaknesses of the CMP, the performance of the crisis team, and structural features of the

organization. Evaluations that are too general serve little purpose if the goal is to improve crisis management performance. The CMP should be revised by building on the strengths and developing ways to correct the weaknesses.

Crisis team members must be evaluated for both individual-level and group-level factors. As noted in Chapter 5, certain knowledge, skills, and traits are helpful in a crisis team member. In addition, the crisis team must perform as a group. Thus, the group-level factors, such as group decision making, are relevant during evaluation. The crisis management evaluation data should yield assessments of how individual team members performed as well as how the team as a whole performed.

Impact Evaluation

The crisis management performance should help the organization by protecting it from damage in some way. Crisis management is designed to protect important organizational assets such as people, reputation, and financial concerns (Barton, 2001; Marcus & Goodman, 1991). The crisis management performance evaluation should include measures of damage factors that reflect success or failure in protecting these assets. Crisis communication can be evaluated using specific measures designed to determine if the objectives set by the crisis team were met and general measures related to how crisis can affect an organization.

Specific Measures: Assessing Objectives

Chapter 8 noted stakeholder-related and organization-related crisis communication objectives. Stakeholder-related objectives require collecting data about stakeholder safety and well-being. The organization must determine the number of injuries and deaths caused by the crisis to assess the amount of physical harm. Organizations should also determine how victims are reacting to the crisis to assess the psychological well-being objective. Crisis management has no higher priority than to protect the human factors that can be harmed in a crisis. It is important to determine how effective the organization was at preserving physical safety and psychological well-being.

Organization-related objectives include reputation, financial performance, and word of mouth. The reputational factors involve perceptions of the organization. Three related elements are relevant to assessing crisis effects on reputation: (1) pre- and postcrisis reputation scores, (2) media and Internet coverage of the crisis, and (3) stakeholder feedback. Any organization that expends resources on managing its reputation should make the effort to track its reputation over time. The organization should assess its reputation on a regular basis by soliciting evaluations from stakeholders. Comparing pre- and postcrisis organizational reputations is the strongest indicator of the reputational impact of a crisis and whether the crisis team limited the reputational damage to the target amount specified in the reputation measurement objective.

During a crisis, stakeholders experience an organization through the media, the Internet, and the organization's crisis management actions. The media portrayals of the organization and the crisis can be critical in shaping the perceptions of other stakeholders involved in the crisis (Fearn-Banks, 2001; Pearson & Clair, 1998). Stories of an uncaring organization in disarray erode a reputation and injure the stakeholder-organization relationship. The media's power intensifies when it is the primary channel for reaching stakeholders. Stories in the media become the central crisis experiences when stakeholders have no real contact with the organization and are dependent on the media for information. Experts believe stakeholder crisis evaluations will reflect the media depictions. Thus, if the media are critical of the organization, its reputation with stakeholders could suffer. Conversely, the reputation would be protected by favorable media portrayals (Nelkin, 1988). With the growing use of the Internet (digital media), especially social media, for crisis information, online coverage of a crisis is important for the same reasons. Most stakeholders, especially those who are not victims, are most likely to experience the crisis through some combination of the traditional news media and digital media.

Managers should analyze the crisis coverage in the traditional and digital media. Analysts can examine the various reports for positive and negative statements about the organization. To preserve important details, the positive and negative statements should be tracked by time, to indicate precisely when the crisis managers were perceived as doing something good or bad, and by media outlet. Different media outlets might create more positive or negative coverage. It would be helpful to know which outlets were positive and which were negative about the crisis. Analysis of the amount of positive and negative media coverage helps to determine the success in achieving the media coverage favorability objective.

Finally, the media coverage needs to be examined for key crisis messages. Managers need to determine how often their key messages were being repeated in the media—the media are using their frames for the crisis. Media frames refer to the success of placing the organization's side of the story in the media. The organization's side of the story involves accurate information about what happened in the crisis, the organization's response, and the organization's interpretation of the crisis. Analysts search for evidence markers of the organization's side of the story in the media reports. These include quotations from organizational spokespersons, media use of organizational sound bites, and accurate descriptions of the crisis event. Media frame success is measured in three ways. First is the percentage of media reports that use messages from the organization. Second is a comparison of the amount of organizational frame material versus counter-frame materials in the media coverage. For instance, who was quoted more by the media: the organization or its critics? Third is the accuracy of the crisis-related information appearing in the media. The higher the percentage of information the organization considers accurate, the more successful its media frame efforts. The same holds true for the frames that appear in Internet reports of the crisis.

The financial objectives include sales, market share, and stock price. Sales figures should

be compared pre- and postcrisis crisis to determine if there is a drop in sales and by how much. Sales figures alone can be deceiving if an entire sector happens to have a drop. Market share can be used with sales figures. If sales drop but market share (percentage of the market controlled by the organization) is stable, it would suggest the downturn is a sector problem and not a result of a crisis. Stock prices should be monitored for pre- and postcrisis levels. Managers must control for general market fluctuations to determine whether any drop in the stock prices is really attributable to the crisis (Baucus & Baucus, 1997; Baucus & Near, 1991; Sen & Egelhoff, 1991).

Finally, managers should track the word of mouth about an organization. Social media is the easiest form of word-of-mouth data. Word-of-mouth data is a subset of the media data. Managers would divide out the social media coverage to determine if the word of mouth is negative or positive after a crisis and exactly what stakeholders do or do not like about the organization.

General Measures

In addition to assessing objectives, managers can collect general data that provide some indicators of the success or failure of a crisis communication effort. The general measures are not linked to specific objectives but do reflect common negative effects that a crisis can have on an organization. Managers can determine whether these potential negative effects emerged during their crisis. Managers collect what we can call general evaluative information.

Social media, a common form of digital media, provides an interesting piece of general evaluative information—responses from stakeholders. Stakeholders can post online how they felt about the organization's crisis management. Analysis of these comments can provide insights into the effectiveness of the crisis management effort. Three important insights are as follows: Did stakeholders accept or reject the crisis response strategies? What did stakeholders like or dislike about the crisis management effort? What else did stakeholders want the organization to do? Of course, the online comments are not necessarily a representative sample of stakeholders, so crisis managers must put this information in perspective. However, the stakeholders who do comment show that they are involved and willing to take action, which makes them an important subset of stakeholders. As noted in Chapter 4 and earlier in this chapter, organizations can hire firms to collect and analyze both traditional news media and social media coverage of a crisis.

Skilled crisis managers communicate to stakeholders through channels other than the news media and Internet, such as telephone, direct mail, or e-mail. A well-developed stakeholder network provides the foundation for more direct contact with stakeholders. Thus, assessing stakeholder satisfaction with the crisis management performance is critical. As noted previously, external feedback from stakeholders should be part of any crisis management performance evaluation. Negative feedback suggests that there will be reputational damage because stakeholders perceive the crisis as mishandled. Conversely,

positive feedback indicates that the CMT's good work might help to protect the reputation. Stakeholder evaluations have limitations when used to evaluate reputations; they are an imprecise substitute for actual reputation measures and are collected only after a crisis, so there is no way to determine if they have improved or worsened after a crisis. As with the media and Internet coverage, other factors are at work. Stakeholder feedback provides crude reputational indices but is useful when direct measures of reputation are lacking.

Secondary financial factors are a reminder of the crisis because they continue to drain financial resources. These include lawsuits (number and total value) and new regulations. A large number of lawsuits, or an expensive few, drain an organization's financial resources. Court costs are a burden on top of any financial settlements. The litigation costs help to explain why some organizations settle lawsuits out of court while professing innocence and stating that the settlement was necessary to end the costly litigation process. For example, MetPath, a leading medical testing laboratory, paid $35 million to settle fraud charges while maintaining that it had done nothing wrong. New regulations are actions the government takes in response to a crisis. For example, the government may enact regulations to prevent a repeat of a crisis, as the U.S. government considered doing when it weighed the option of banning the use of capsules for over-the-counter medications after the Sudafed and second Tylenol tamperings. Compliance with new regulations can create a financial impact that lasts for years (Sen & Egelhoff, 1991).

The duration of the crisis's media coverage is the final general evaluative point. Effective crisis management tries to move a crisis out of the media (Higbee, 1992). A crisis does this by becoming uninteresting and losing its newsworthiness. Effective crisis management seeks to inform stakeholders and bring closure to a crisis. Both actions reduce newsworthiness. The information vacuum created by a crisis makes it newsworthy. Once stakeholders have the facts, particularly the cause of the crisis, audience curiosity and interest fades. When actions such as repaired damage or a return to normal operations indicate that a crisis is over, the situation loses the news value of being unusual. Conversely, crisis management errors, such as instigating conflict, prolong media coverage by sustaining the newsworthiness of a crisis. Two cases illustrate the relationship between newsworthiness and media coverage.

In May 1985, E. F. Hutton officials pleaded guilty to 2,000 counts of wire and mail fraud and paid a $2 million fine. The story attracted mild media attention as people wondered what had happened at this high-profile investment firm. In September 1985, E. F. Hutton officials announced the results of former Attorney General Griffin Bell's investigation of the case. Bell had been hired by the company to find the cause of the crisis and to provide corrective measures. E. F. Hutton fired 14 executives criticized in the report and pledged to institute other reforms designed to prevent a repeat of the crisis (Koepp, 1985). The media quickly lost interest after the report was issued. Penalties had been paid, guilt admitted, the *why* question answered, and E. F. Hutton was working to prevent a repeat of the crisis. The crisis appeared resolved, stripping it of any newsworthiness.

In April 1996, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) filed a major sexual harassment lawsuit against Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America. The company denied the charges and began a series of attacks against the EEOC. The response was deemed hostile by many observers and was highlighted by a media event when about 2,900 Mitsubishi workers demonstrated at EEOC offices in Chicago. Technically, the protest was organized by workers. However, Mitsubishi played a major role in facilitating the demonstration by allowing time off and helping to arrange bus transportation to Chicago (Annen & McCormick, 1997). The verbal barbs aimed at the EEOC and the litigation continued through 1997, as did the negative media coverage. When Mitsubishi's consultant, former Labor Secretary Lynn Martin, released a report on improving the workplace, the media greeted the announcement with skepticism and the crisis remained alive. The Mitsubishi-EEOC conflict kept the story alive by making it newsworthy. Crisis managers should try to reduce, not increase, the newsworthiness of a crisis. A CMT has erred when its actions prolong media coverage of the crisis.

An assessment of the stakeholder responses, stakeholder feedback, secondary financial, and media duration factors enable you to measure the final impact of the crisis. But how does this general information help with the evaluation of crisis management performance? Alone, these factors do not evaluate crisis performance. They simply describe the impact of the crisis. What crisis managers must do is compare the outcome to (a) the projections made about what the impact would have been if no actions were taken to manage the crisis and (b) the desired objectives of the crisis management team. While speculation is involved in both cases, careful projections can be made. Similar procedures are used in evaluating issues management efforts (Jones & Chase, 1979). Honesty is important. The CMT must not inflate the potential damage or low-ball their objectives if the exercise is to be meaningful. What the damage assessment provides is some objective verification that the effect of the crisis performance was positive, negative, or of no consequence to the organization.

Summary

All of the various crisis performance data and analysis should be condensed into a final report, complete with an executive summary and recommendations. Remember, the purposes are to learn and to improve crisis performance, not to assign blame. Once completed, the evaluation indicates (a) whether the CMT did what it should have done and did so effectively, (b) whether the CMP proved useful in anticipating and resolving situations created by the crisis, (c) if structural features facilitated or hindered the crisis management effort, and (d) the crisis damage. Combined, this evaluation identifies specific strengths and weaknesses of the CMT, the CMP, and the organization. Furthermore, the inclusion of damage analyses indicates whether a crisis management performance is deemed successful. Sometimes a crisis team can execute a CMP well but still face massive damage, or a team can perform a suspect plan poorly yet the organization suffers little damage. For

example, Johnson & Johnson had no CMP when it successfully managed the 1982 Tylenol tampering. There are exceptions to all rules, but crisis managers should not count on luck. It is much wiser to prepare.

MEMORY AND LEARNING

As mentioned, analysis creates crisis lessons. But what use are crisis lessons if they cannot be recalled to help prevent a repeat of a mistake or to recreate a success? Remembering and recall are the domains of institutional or organizational memory (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Knowledge management favors the term *organizational memory* as the repository of organizational knowledge (Li, YeZhuang, & Ying, 2004). Like people, organizations can store information and knowledge for later use (Weick, 1979). A crisis should not be wasted, because "direct experience with a crisis, although painful, teaches more than even the best scenario ever could" (Newsom, VanSlyke Turk, & Kruckeberg, 1996, p. 544). Evaluation reveals the lessons that hard experience teaches the organization. And the crisis lessons must be remembered by becoming a part of institutional memory.

Effective use of institutional or organizational memory involves storage and retrieval (Li et al., 2004; Weick, 1979). First, there must be some means of recording and storing the crisis knowledge: the crisis documentation and the evaluation report, the crisis lessons. Storage options include hard copies and computer files. Either means requires redundancy and storage at multiple locations (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Storage is more than recording knowledge; it also involves rating key crisis information for accuracy and comprehensiveness. Not all crisis information and knowledge are of the same quality, though. Some knowledge is more accurate—more fact than speculation—and more comprehensive—more complete and containing fewer potential errors (Garvin, 1996).

The crisis knowledge must be easy to retrieve for later use. Retrieval involves being able to search for and locate specific details (Weick, 1979). The intranet is a logical place to store crisis knowledge for easy retrieval. Intranet systems can use their own search mechanisms. Careful organization and input of the crisis knowledge will permit easy searches and retrieval during later crisis management efforts. Again, recording is not a simple process. The crisis knowledge must be carefully and accurately stored if it is to be useful. Each organization must develop its own system for organizing crisis knowledge into a format that is searchable and retrievable.

Organizational memory requires a word of warning—do not become a slave to memory (Weick, 1979). Crisis managers must be willing to disregard past actions and knowledge if they do not fit well with a current crisis. Blindly following past successes can lead to blunders when the past crisis is not wholly consistent with the current crisis. Organizational memory of crises can help to create an information acquisition bias. The memory of past crises is both a blessing and a curse. However, the skilled CMT should be able to overcome the blind spot of information acquisition bias.

But what good is a memory if it is never used? Crisis managers can carefully dissect the crisis management effort and skillfully record those lessons. If those lessons do not move from memory to action, the organization and the crisis teams have not learned. Organizational learning is a vast and complicated discipline. One short section in a book cannot do it justice but can lead crisis managers to learn more about the subject. Organizational learning seeks to understand how organizations adapt and change—how they learn. Of course, the term *organizational learning* itself is debated because isn't it really people in the organization that learn? But let's assume that organizations can learn. How might they learn from the evaluation of a crisis management effort? Ideally, the evaluation helps people in the organization understand what they are doing right and what they are doing wrong. The strengths are reinforced and weaknesses are corrected. Through correction comes adaptation and learning.

Argyris and Schön (1978) talk about two types of learning in organizations—single-loop and double-loop:

> When the error detected and corrected permits the organization to carry on its present policies or achieve its present objectives, then that error-and-correction process is *single-loop* learning. Single-loop learning is like a thermostat that learns when it is too hot or too cold and turns the heat on or off. The thermostat can perform this task because it can receive information (the temperature of the room) and take corrective action. *Double-loop* learning occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives. (pp. 2–3)

We can apply these ideas to learning driven by crises. Some crises reveal simple factors that are easy to correct—single-loop learning. Other crises require a serious reconsideration of organizational principles and practices—double-loop learning. An industrial accident illustrates this point. An employee is unloading chemicals and unloads them into the wrong tank, resulting in a chemical reaction and explosion. Analysis of the crisis management effort finds that the employee was a new hire and had not been fully trained on chemical unloading procedures. All other employees are fully trained and would know not to mix the two chemicals. Training one employee is the solution—single-loop learning. But what if analysis reveals a general lack of safety training and enforcement of safety rules by management? The problem is systemic and requires a more complicated solution as the organization must wrestle with its safety culture—double-loop learning. The point is that organizational learning sounds easy but can be complex. Just because lessons are found and recorded does not mean they will be applied; there are no guarantees an organization will learn from a thorough evaluation of a crisis and crisis management effort. The section ends with a word of warning. The discussion of organizational memory and learning sounds very logical, but organizations are simply collections of people. People have reasons for distorting or withholding information in organizations, especially information related to crises. People often fear the repercussions of sharing what they know about a crisis. Organizational memories are often inaccurate, and organizations frequently fail to learn from crises.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

BP and Texas City: Act 3

It is now 3 days since the initial blast at Texas City. The news media have been running stories about other accidents at the Texas City plant. One story announces that BP has the worst safety record in the petrochemical industry. A total of 15 people have been killed and over 100 injured. Twelve of the injured are still hospitalized. The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigation team is on site. The CSB is there to determine the cause of the blast. The CSB notes that key alarms were not working and that the startup was done even though important parts of the system were not working properly. Also, BP had not connected the damaged tower to a safety flare system. A recommendation to change the safety system had been made well before the accident, and BP management's own documents show that they were aware of the recommendation. What can you do to help craft an effective response to this crisis? What should BP be saying and doing now?

Postcrisis Actions

The responsibility of the crisis team continues until all crisis-related obligations are fulfilled. The postcrisis tasks can be divided into three groups: cooperation with investigations, follow-up communication, and crisis tracking. Even though the organization has returned to normal operations and the immediate effects have dissipated, the cause of the crisis may still be under investigation by government officials. The crisis team must be sure to cooperate with any investigation. Cooperation builds goodwill with the government agencies involved and indicates to other stakeholders that the organization is open and honest. Openness leads to the topic of follow-up communication.

Follow-up communication is an extension of the crisis recovery phase. Crisis managers maintain positive organization-stakeholder relationships by keeping stakeholders informed about the crisis even when it is over and by continuing to answer new inquiries. Again, social media is ideal for follow-up information, but the channels are designed for updating of information. Employee assistance efforts must continue as well, to help those overwhelmed by the trauma of the crisis. Crisis managers should update the stakeholders on the progress and results of ongoing investigations and the actions being taken to prevent a repeat of the crisis. In regard to preventing future crises, crisis managers might tell stakeholders when the changes have been completed and how well the changes are working. The changes actually become part of the crisis prevention subphase, since the actions are designed to prevent future crises.

Special consideration should be given to memorials, which celebrate or honor the

memory of people or events. Crises have the potential to trigger memorializing, especially when there is loss of life. The September 11 attacks and the Oklahoma City bombing resulted in memorializing (Veil, Sellnow, & Heald, 2011). Memorials are important because they help people mourn and cope with grief and they provide an opportunity to recognize rescuers (Foot, Warnick, & Schneider, 2005). Organizations and/or stakeholders may feel the need to create memorials. A memorial can be viewed as a follow-up to the recognition of those injured or lost immediately after a crisis occurs. Shortly after an accident killed six employees in Kinston, North Carolina, West Pharmaceuticals held a memorial service, and a year later it dedicated two memorial plaques in the lobby of its new Kinston facility.

Memorials can be offline, such as the plaques in Kinston, or online. Following the explosion and sinking of the Deepwater Horizon, Transocean created a condolence website. The site recognized the 11 employees who died and gave people an opportunity to post messages and share memories, photographs, and videos of those who perished. September 11 saw the creation of the Cantor Families Memorial website for employees of Cantor Fitzgerald and the Association of Flights Attendants creating an "In Memoriam" page for those they had lost (Foot et al., 2005). The Cantor Families Memorial has individual tribute pages for the departed employees, arranged in alphabetical order. Each page has a set format, but people are permitted to write their own tributes. Foot et al. (2005) note that the web memorial is "a remarkable example of individual memorializing on a corporately produced site" (p. 82). Here is the statement that appears on the home page of the Cantor Families Memorial site:

> On the morning of September 11th, we lost more than a team. We lost family. We mourn the losses of our siblings, our best friends, and our partners. We cannot imagine work or life without them nor their many unique qualities and characteristics. They have enriched our lives immeasurably, and in us, their spirits shall live on.
>
> This Web site was created for the Cantor family of companies and all employees of eSpeed, Inc., Cantor Fitzgerald, L.P., and TradeSpark, L.P., to commemorate all those lost in the World Trade Center tragedy. It is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the memory of our families, our friends, and our colleagues. Please join with us now in paying tribute to those who have so deeply touched—and continue to touch—our lives. (*In Loving Memory*, n.d.)

Online memorials permit more of a personal touch—ordinary people can leave personal comments (Hess, 2007). Leaving comments about grief and loss help people complete the healing process (Carlson & Hocking, 1988; Siegl & Foot, 2004). Crisis managers may want to encourage or facilitate the creation of online memorials and even offline memorials if people in the organization feel it will help in the recovery process. The examples from Cantor Fitzgerald and Transocean show there are different ways to facilitate the development of online memorials. The key is that stakeholders affected by the crisis have a place to go that helps with the grieving process. Crisis managers need to decide whether the organization will create an official memorial. Crisis managers also should scan the Internet for spontaneous online memorials. Photo-sharing sites are a logical place for online memorials to emerge, but stakeholders might create memorial websites as well. Crisis managers could then decide how the organization should relate to these spontaneous

memorial sites.

Memorials are ways to express mourning that are tied to some site, physical or online, for remembering. While the idea of a memorial sounds simple, it is a very complex phenomenon. In fact the field of memory studies has tried to explain the complexity that surrounds memories, including memorials. Memorials are tied to memory, and people can have different memories of the same event. There can be conflicts over how a crisis should be remembered—the nature of the memorial (Szpunar, 2010). Memorials are messages about the crisis because the memorials frame how people will interpret (remember) the crisis event. Organizational managers and victims may have very different views about how a crisis should be remembered. One crisis objective for organizational managers is to place the crisis in the past, while those affected by the crisis will want to remember the situation. This can lead to conflict over the nature of the memorial. Crisis managers must be aware of the sensitive nature of memorials and the potential conflicting memories about the crisis.

Crisis managers need to engage the stakeholders that created the memorial to discuss whether there is any possible role for the organization in this healing community. Victims and family members are the most likely source for spontaneous, online memorials. If the victims and family members blame the organization, they may not want the organization involved at all. Crisis managers must respect that decision and maintain their distance from the online memorial. If the memorial creators are open to some connections, the organization might acknowledge the memorial site on the organization's website and could even provide a link to the memorial site.

Poorly handled memorial events lead by the organization can cause a crisis to linger or for negative emotions to resurface. On the first anniversary of the Costa Concordia crisis, Carnival Cruise held a memorial event that included placing a large rock, recovered from the reef the ship struck, in the water with a commemorative plaque. The families of the 32 people who died were invited to the event. Because the island of Giglio, the location of the wreck, was so small, the survivors were asked not to attend. The survivors, themselves victims of the crisis, took offense at the request and the memorial event generated negative coverage in the traditional and social media (Winfield, 2013).

The families of victims expressed outrage over how Cinemark was attempting to memorialize the killing of 12 people at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, by a gunman. Cinemark was celebrating by reopening the renovated cinema. A number of government officials were going to attend and the families of the victims were invited. However, no one from Cinemark really took the time to understand how the families felt about their plans (Elliott, 2013). Nine of the families of the victims placed an advertisement in a Colorado newspaper condemning the plan. Here is a segment of their statement:

> This disgusting offer that you'd *"like to invite you and a guest to a special evening of remembrance on Thursday, January 17 at 5 PM"* followed by the showing of a movie and then telling us to be sure *"to reserve our tickets"* is wholly offensive to the memory of our loved ones.
>
> Our family members will never be on this earth with us again and a movie ticket and some token words from

people who didn't care enough to reach out to us, nor respond when we reached out to them to talk, is appalling. (Letter, 2013, para. 4)

As with the Costa Concordia, this event intended to heal actually reopened old wounds from the crisis. Organizations can avoid such mistakes by engaging with victims and their families while planning an event. It is important to remember that people can have varying interpretations of memorials and memorializing events. Crisis managers must take care that their efforts to heal do not result in intensifying the pain caused by a crisis.

As noted in Chapter 8, the renewal crisis response (discourse of renewal) has applications for postcrisis communication, too. Renewal emphasizes helping victims and projecting a positive view of the future for the organization and its stakeholders. Renewal has a strong learning component because it is intended to help organizations learn and grow from the crisis. Renewal helps stakeholders adjust after a crisis by creating a view of reality based on an optimistic future for the organization and its stakeholders. Renewal concentrates on opportunities, is prospective rather than retrospective, and is leader based (driven by the organizational leader; Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2006).

Renewal cannot be applied to every crisis because it has some very specific parameters that limit when it can be used. There are four criteria that must exist if managers are to utilize renewal as a crisis response: (a) the organization has a strong precrisis ethical standard; (b) the organization's precrisis relationships with constituencies are strong and favorable; (c) the organization can focus on life beyond the crisis rather than seeking to escape blame, including fixing the problem; and (d) the organization desires to engage in effective crisis communication (Ulmer et al., 2006). Not all organizations will have the requisite background and relationships with stakeholders to utilize renewal. Renewal captures many of the postcrisis points discussed in this chapter. Renewal can involve learning and memorials, hence, it is a useful approach to guide postcrisis communication when the crisis situation fits the four criteria necessary for renewal.

Any crisis must be monitored when it is over, even if no changes are initiated. Crisis tracking monitors the factors that produced the crisis to see whether another threat may arise. Crisis tracking feeds back into signal detection and crisis preparation. Simply put, the postcrisis phase ends with crisis managers moving back to the actions involved in the precrisis phase of crisis management; the process is ongoing.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Carefree Cruise Line: Act 4

It has been 6 months since your cruise ship sank off the coast of a small island in Italy. A total of 32 people died from the crisis. The cruise ship is still visible, half submerged in the sea. It is estimated it will be another year before the salvage company can remove the ship completely from the area. Six months from now will be the 1-year

anniversary of the shipwreck. You know that the news media will be very interested in this event and that the digital media will be active too. There is already an online memorial at the site Gonetoosoon.org. The organization needs to be thinking about what it will do for the anniversary, if anything. The location is rather remote for anyone to reach and the towns nearby are very small. That makes a large celebration logistically very challenging.

- Would you recommend an organization-driven anniversary memorial? Why or why not?
- What type of memorial event would you recommend if the organization is to develop one?
- How would you engage the survivors and the victims' families in the preparation for the event?
- What are the greatest challenges posed by this memorial event?

THE BIG PICTURE

As we conclude the discussion of the crisis communication and the crisis management process, it is time to reflect on the bigger picture of crisis communication and society. Critics of crisis communication focus on how it is used to protect organizational assets. Any crisis team that prioritizes organizational assets over public safety and welfare is destined for short-term and long-term failure as crisis managers. Crisis communication must make public safety and welfare the number-one priority in a crisis. By protecting stakeholders, the organization will naturally be protecting itself by preserving valuable relationships with stakeholders. Being willing to disclose any and all information that can threaten stakeholders (see Chapter 8) is paramount to crisis communication. Withholding information pertinent to stakeholders will hurt the organization in the long run and serve to intensify damage from a crisis. For instance, consumers are angered when an organization appears slow in warning them about product harm and may choose to sever their ties to the organization that is slow to disclose or hides product harm information from them.

The learning from crisis management can be extended to society. A key element of learning is improving prevention. By understanding what went wrong in a crisis, an organization can seek to mitigate the reoccurrence of a similar crisis. Crisis prevention benefits society by protecting the health and safety of stakeholders. Fewer or lower magnitude chemical accidents or product harm episodes are beneficial to society. However, organizations frequently fail to learn from crises and simply recreate the conditions that resulted in the initial crisis. If management concentrates on just returning to normal operations, how things were done before, management has failed to take steps to mitigate a

repeat of the crisis. Crises indicate a problem for the organization and society. Some actions must be taken to solve that problem. Learning can be a simple change in procedures or a very complex change in how the organization operates. (Refer to the earlier discussion on learning.) Crisis managers fail their obligations to society when crisis learning fails to address the underlying conditions that helped to create the crisis.

CONCLUSION

Even when a crisis is perceived to be over, the efforts of the crisis management process remain in motion. The crisis management performance must be evaluated. Careful evaluation is essential to improved performance. The downside is that a thorough evaluation is time-consuming and somewhat painful. Still, the rewards more than justify the expenditure of resources. Evaluation and crisis documentation should become part of the functional institutional or organizational memory. A well-organized recording of crisis knowledge will allow the knowledge to be used effectively during future crisis management efforts. Last, the crisis team must help any continuing investigations, maintain the flow of follow-up information to stakeholders, and continue to track the crisis. In so doing, the crisis team has a natural segue back to the precrisis phase of crisis management, showing that crisis management can be an ongoing process.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES: LEARNING ORIENTATION

Crisis leadership should possess a learning orientation. A learning orientation reflects a desire for new skills. James and Wooten (2010) contrast a learning orientation with a performance orientation. The performance orientation encourages people to stick with what they already know so that they can demonstrate competence. The desire to learn and to try new skills is lacking. Leaders with a learning orientation view the crisis as an opportunity to improve the organization and not just as a threat to the organization. A learning orientation helps an organization to reduce the frequency, likelihood, and impact of future negative outcomes while increases the frequency, likelihood, and impact of future positive outcomes (James & Wooten, 2010). As noted in this chapter, learning should be a part of the postcrisis phase of crisis management.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How often do you feel key stakeholders should be updated with postcrisis information?

2. How can crisis logs help to make postcrisis updates more effective?
3. What is the danger of having an organizational crisis memory?
4. What are some of the barriers you would face when conducting a postcrisis evaluation? How might you overcome those barriers?

Epilogue

Projections and Reflections

An epilogue is the concluding section of a work. Chapter 9 seems like a natural ending point because it covers the postcrisis phase and the end of the crisis management and communication effort. This book ends by looking at the near future and the past of communication to provide a few more recommendations to help crisis communicators. The projections review two trends that crisis managers will need to contend with for the foreseeable future: communication technology advancements and globalization. The reflections provide a review of the key insights reported in this book and are based on years of crisis communication research. This section includes a discussion of why research is so valuable to the practice of crisis communication.

PROJECTS: THE NEAR FUTURE OF CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Projections deal with the future. This section considers important trends that will shape the future of crisis communication. Two interrelated trends will dominate crisis communication in the foreseeable future: (1) communication technology and (2) globalization. The trends are interrelated because communication technology contributes to globalization.

Communication Technology

The Internet is a breeding ground for new communication channels that allow users to create and to share content—social media. We live in world where terms like *tweets, Facebook*, and *blogs* make sense. There is every reason to believe the trend of new social media channels appearing will continue.

Crisis managers must attempt to understand how each new channel might affect the practice. Crisis managers must learn to harness the power of social media by integrating it into efforts to scan for and monitor crisis threats. One consequence is that some crisis threats need to be managed in public. These paracrises will appear very similar to crises but are really efforts to address a crisis threat. Paracrises are most closely associated with challenges, rumors, and product harm crises. They blur the lines separating precrisis and crisis response. Social media has already proven its value to crisis response. Still, we lack insights into its exact value in providing instructing information and how best to utilize the interactive nature of social media during a crisis. Crisis managers need to understand how

social media and traditional websites can be used to create online memorials following a crisis. The challenge is how to effectively coordinate the organization's follow-up communication with these spontaneous memorials.

Another concern is understanding how to integrate technology into crisis team operations. Mass notification software is not static, and crisis managers must assess how any changes might help in crisis communication. Technology can be used to keep crisis team members in contact when they are in different locations and provide software that can help to manage the information processing required during a crisis. Crisis Commander is an example of a set of software solutions designed to aid crisis information sharing and processing. It provides emergency notification, allows crisis teams members to stay in contact with one another, offers a way to access plans and other needed information, and provides logs for recording information (Crisis Commander, 2012).

Globalization

Globalization continues at a rapid pace as countries become more interdependent through various commercial arrangements. Globalization is about the international integration and increased interchange of goods, service, and culture between countries. Obviously communication technology facilitates globalization by making communication faster and easier across vast distances. A good example of that is how Skype allows real-time conversations, complete with video images of the participants. Transnational organizations are the driving force behind globalization. An organization is transnational when it has operations in two or more countries. Transnational organizations have a home company, their base of operations, and host countries, places they have operations. For instance, the Spanish retailer Zara has stores in over 80 countries and McDonald's has restaurants in over 90 countries. Nike distributes products in over 160 countries and has over 800 manufacturing locations (suppliers) in 43 countries (Nike, 2013). All of these well-known companies reflect globalization because they all sell and source materials around the globe.

Globalization increases crisis risks for organizations. Each extension into a new country creates novel risks. Labor practices, safety regulations, customer expectations, and social stability are just some of the additional risks that come with globalization. Transnational organizations typically know the crisis risks of the home country very well. The transnational organization is based in the home country and has been operating there longer than in any other country. The host countries are not as well known to the transnational organization. This lack of knowledge extends to the crisis risk factors. Local knowledge is needed to understand the host countries and the threats each may produce for crises. In each host country the transnational organization needs to identify the crisis risks and develop systems for monitoring and integrating those risks.

Supply chains are an excellent illustration of the crisis risks associated with globalization. The supply chain is the movement of a product from raw material to

processing/manufacturing, to distribution, to retailers, and finally to customers. This involves all the steps from extracting or growing raw materials until the consumer buys the finished product. Think of the steps and materials that go into your cell phone. Odds are there are materials from around the world. Supply chains are getting longer (have more steps) and are spread out across the globe. Consider how Nike has suppliers from over 40 different countries. Each step and every location in the supply chain has the potential for creating a crisis. Crises can be triggered by raw materials or processing. Even though the problem may be with a supplier, the company that sells the product is ultimately responsible and is the organization that will suffer the crisis. A few examples will help to reinforce the connection between supply chains and crises.

In the 1990s, activists made customers aware of the use of sweatshop and child labor in the garment industry supply chain. Nike became the target because it was one of the largest companies in the garment industry. Nike became associated with sweatshops and worked hard to create certification systems to verify its suppliers were not abusing workers. In 2011, Versace agreed to stop using suppliers that sandblasted clothes to give them a faded look. The process is very damaging to the health of workers. Versace was pressured into making the change by the activist group Clean Clothes Campaign (*Versace Announces,* 2011). A list of major brands such as H&M, Adidas, Nike, Puma, and Zara all agreed to end the use of certain toxic substances in the processing of fabric as a result of the Detox campaign by the activist group Greenpeace. The "No Dirty Gold" campaign targets gold producers who extract the mineral irresponsibly, thereby generating huge amounts of toxic waste. In each of these four cases the crisis risk was the processing of raw materials.

Most people are familiar with the concept of "blood diamonds." Diamonds used to fund warfare and genocide became known as "blood diamonds" or "conflict diamonds." The Kimberley Process was developed in 2003 to document the source of diamonds and prove whether a diamond was a blood diamond. International pressure to end the use of blood diamonds helped to severely curtail the amount of blood diamonds entering the supply chain, though concerns linger about diamonds extracted from the Ivory Coast. The idea was that consumer pressure for conflict-free diamonds would change corporations' diamond purchases, which would, in turn, reduce the human rights abuses associated with blood diamonds. The change was due in part to customers becoming aware of blood diamonds and their desire not to purchase them (McClanahan, 2011).

Conflict minerals (also known as conflict metals or blood minerals) are close relatives to the blood diamonds. The profits from conflict minerals are used to fund wars and genocide in Africa, with the Democratic Republic of Congo at the center of concern. Millions of people have died as a result of the civil war in the Congo, and conflict minerals obtained through illegal mines help to fuel the violence and human rights abuses (Kristof, 2010). Moreover, workers and those living near the mines, especially women, are abused. Conflict minerals include tantalum (coltan), tin (cassiterite), tungsten (wolframite), and gold (*Conflict Free Smelter Program,* 2010). You may not know it, but you probably have those

minerals with you right now if you have a mobile phone, computer, or iPod. The biggest market for conflict minerals is the electronics industry. Conflict diamonds and minerals are examples of risk from product/raw material itself.

Daesang Corporation is the largest food company in South Korea, its home country, and a major player in the global marketplace, it has many host countries including the United States. As a food company, its key risk factors include foodborne illness and contaminated foodstuffs that could enter its global supply chain. Daesang actively monitors media in a variety of languages to identify early warnings about foodstuff that might be in their supply chain. Through early identification, the company can prevent that foodstuff from contaminating a Daesang brand. The crisis scanning requires people skilled in multiple languages to review the media reports for warning signs. These warning signs are collected daily and shared with relevant managers within the organization. The Daesang Corporation's crisis-sensing system is very sophisticated and reflects the complex demands that face transnational organizations.

There are two types of international crises: host and global. A host occurs in one or more host countries. Global crises appear in the home country and one or most host countries. Both types require companies to manage crises outside of their own country and comfort zone. Crisis managers will be less familiar with how to manage a crisis and communicate in the host countries than in the home country. Crisis managers must resist ethnocentric tendencies as they cope with stakeholders in different cultures, unfamiliar media systems and online usage patterns, and different legal concerns (Coombs, 2008).

Carrefour is a French department store chain similar to Walmart and Tesco. In 2008, French protestors repeatedly attacked the Olympic torch as it when through France. The torch was extinguished a few times and the route had to be altered. The French protestors were unhappy that the 2008 Olympics were in Beijing when China was abusing human rights, especially in Tibet. The attacks were viewed as an insult by many Chinese citizens, and Carrefour, as a symbol of France, came under fire. The Internet was swimming with calls to boycott Carrefour to go along with the many offline protests against Carrefour. The company was in a global crisis. The crisis was in China (host country) but also had ramifications for the home country, as the French human rights stakeholders were not pleased with Carrefour's efforts to support the 2008 Olympics. The situation did not stabilize for Carrefour until the Chinese government requested that people not punish Carrefour for protestors with no connection to the company.

Matt Corby is a teenager in Australia with a cell phone and a Facebook page, and that was enough to trigger a global crisis. He took a picture of his Subway sandwich showing it was not 12 inches long. Given the sandwich is called a "footlong" (12 inches), he was upset (Loreno, 2013). His posting resulted in many people in the United States measuring their Subway footlongs and coming up short. There have even been lawsuits filed against Subway in the United States for not delivering the promised 12 inches of sandwich (Manker, 2013). The "crisis" spread from a host country (Australia) to the home country (United

States). In 2012, McDonald's experience a host crisis in China. A Chinese television show did an expose showing how a McDonald's restaurant was violating company policies and food safety regulations by using beef patties that had been dropped on the floor, selling expired food, and serving chicken that had been sitting for 90 minutes instead of the 30-minute limit (*Beijing McDonald's Expired Food,* 2012). These three examples illustrate how easy it is for an international crisis to ignite and to spread.

International crises are complex because crisis managers must cope with differing laws, regulations, media systems, and cultures. Cultures are the most complex of the factors because they influence stakeholder expectations about organizations and crises. Taylor (2000) emphasizes the role of culture in Coca-Cola's crisis in Belgium and other parts of Europe. There were reports that Coca-Cola might have a product harm situation. Some people might have become ill after drinking Coca-Cola. There were reports of problems, but firm evidence about product harm was not immediately available. Coca-Cola's office in the United States (home) did not see the situation in Belgium (host) immediately as a crisis and wanted more information. The Belgians did see the situation as a crisis and ordered a product recall. Taylor traced the problem to cultural differences in ambiguity tolerance. The United States is more tolerant of ambiguity (uncertainty), so the home office was slower to react to the situation. The home office wanted more information to determine the cause of the potential product harm. The lower ambiguity tolerance in Belgium required quicker action to resolve the uncertainty.

International crises are transnational, crossing national borders, which means that culture becomes a factor. The terms *nation* and *culture* do not mean exactly the same thing. Nations have geographic boundaries whereas culture can be defined as "people who are domestic speakers of a common distinct language and who belong to either the same state or the same contact group" (Malhotra, Agarwal, & Peterson, 1996, p. 25). There can be overlap between the two concepts captured in the term *national culture*. "A culture can be validly conceptualized at the national level if there exists some meaningful degree of within-country commonality and between-country differences in culture" (Steenkamp, 2001, p. 36). The point is that international crises demand that crisis managers have at least a basic understanding of culture because cultural differences can play a significant role when crises cross national boundaries. Cultures can be understood by comparing them across a number of dimensions. If two cultures differ on a dimension, that could be a critical point to consider in the crisis. In the Belgium case, the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance helped to explain the problems in the crisis case. Table E.1 provides a list of some of the common dimensions of culture that could be useful to international crisis managers.

Table E.1 Common Cultural Dimensions

1. Power distance: people's willing to accept power differences
2. Individualism versus collectivism: the tight- or loose-knit structure of a society
3. Uncertainty avoidance: people's level of discomfort with ambiguity
4. Masculinity versus femininity: society's emphasis on competition or cooperation
5. Long-term versus short-term orientation: society's emphasis on thrift and long-term results or savings and quick returns
6. Indulgence versus restraint: people's willingness to suppress gratifications
7. Universalism versus pluralism: society's emphasis on rules or relationships
8. Individualism versus communitarianism: people consider selves as part of collective or as individuals

9. Specific versus diffuse: people choose to diffuse or assign responsibility
10. Affectivity versus neutrality: people's willingness to display or conceal emotions
11. Inner directed versus outer directed: people feel they control the environment or that they are controlled by the environment
12. Achieved status versus ascribed status: people must prove they have earned status or are given status
13. Sequential time versus synchronic time: people's desire to accomplish one task at a time or multiple tasks at one time

Source: Hofstede (1980); Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997).

Culture itself can be considered a risk factor. Cultural insensitivity by an organization can trigger a crisis. In 1997, American Airlines had a minor crises created by its cultural insensitivity. Because of a court case, the pilot's training guide for Latin America had a number of unflattering characterizations of people living in Latin America. The "Survival in Latin America" section warned that passengers from this area often drink too much and become unruly on flights and have been known to call in bomb threats to delay a flight if they are running late. What made the revelation so problematic for American Airlines is that Latin America was and remains an important market for the airline. Insulting the customers is not an effective way to expand into a new market. American apologized by stating, "We deeply regret the generalizations and tone the guide provided to pilots flying to Latin America. American Airlines holds our Latin customers in the highest regard and has worked hard to demonstrate our commitment to serving the market" (Blanca, 1997, para. 1). A detailed discussion of culture and communication is beyond the scope of this chapter and book; there are hundreds of books written on the subject. The point here is to identify the importance of understanding culture in an environment where international crises are increasingly likely to occur.

REFLECTIONS: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CRISIS COMMUNICATION

This book is just one example of the massive amount of information written about crisis communication and crisis management. I have tried to distill a large chunk of these insights into a usable format for crisis managers, present and future. To conclude the book it is helpful to review some of the most useful ideas about crisis communication. The reflections begin with the idea of an evidence-based approach to crisis communication. An organizing framework for crisis communication insights is presented, followed by the lessons, recommendations, and trends—the insights.

Evidence-Based Crisis Communication

Both medicine and management have witnessed a growing evidence-based movement. An evidence-based approach means that physicians or managers use data for decisions, not simply speculation or accepted wisdom (Rousseau, 2005). I have argued that crisis communication would benefit from an evidence-based approach (Coombs, 2007, 2010b). Crisis communication is a relatively young discipline borne of a need to address very real problems. Typical of applied fields, it began as collections of "war stories" as crisis managers described what they had done to combat a crisis. Slowly a body of accepted wisdom began to emerge. Even more slowly, researchers began to test some of the accepted wisdom and develop theories to explain why certain actions should or should not be taken in a crisis. For instance, the accepted wisdom said to avoid saying "no comment" and to get the organization's message out fast. Later research demonstrated that when stakeholders hear "no comment" they assume the organization is guilty and management is trying to hide something from them. Additional research found that organizations suffer less reputational damage when they are the first to report that a crisis exists, what the researchers termed *stealing thunder*. In both cases the research provided evidence to support the accepted wisdom.

We now have a growing body of crisis communication research that seeks to guide crisis management efforts. Table E.2 lists some of the key theories and researchers tied to each approach. Moreover, some researchers are using experimental methods to test theories, thereby creating actual evidence for evidence-based crisis communication. The move to experimental methods is important because crisis communication research has been dominated by case studies. While case studies can be insightful, their results are more speculation than evidence. The crisis case studies utilize qualitative research methods, resulting in the speculative nature of their findings (Stacks, 2002).

Organizing Framework for Crisis Communication Insights

Table E.2 Key Crisis Theories and Researchers

Crisis Communication Theories	Theorists
Corporate Apologia	Hearit
Image Restoration Theory/Image Repair Discourse	Benoit
Focusing Event	Fishman, Birkland
Discourse of Renewal	Seeger, Ulmer, Sellnow
Situational Crisis Communication Theory	Coombs, Holladay
Contingency Theory (Integrated Crisis Mapping)	Cameron, Jin, Pang

In other writings I have argued that all the various crisis communication activities employed in crisis management can be divided into two categories: (1) managing information and (2) managing meaning. The information void created by a crisis demands the collection and analysis of information. Without processing information, crisis teams could never make the decisions required to drive action. Preparation and prevention require careful information processing as well. Managing meaning involves efforts to influence how stakeholders, both internal and external, perceive threats, the crisis, the crisis response, and the organization involved in the crisis. Managing meaning is critical because it can determine whether action is taken on a threat or crisis and stakeholders' affective and behavioral reactions following a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Jin & Cameron, 2007; Jin & Pang, 2010).

The three stages of crisis management and the two categories of crisis communication can be combined for the crisis communication array (Coombs, 2010a), which is illustrated in Figure E.1. The visual helps crisis managers "see" the various applications of crisis communication throughout the crisis management process. In this chapter, the crisis communication array serves as the organizing framework for summarizing what we really know about crisis communication. Understanding the crisis communication knowledge base is a crucial element in articulating a reliable set of recommendations about crisis communication. Unfortunately, the practice of crisis communication runs ahead of theory. That means we see practices emerging that are in use but have yet to be researched. It is important to consider these emerging trends, as they lack evidence but are still important challenges for crisis managers.

Crisis Communication Lessons, Recommendations, and Trends

This section summarizes the findings that have emerged from the growing body of crisis communication research. I resist using the term *best practices* because that often implies a limited, prescriptive framework. Crisis communication is very dynamic and difficult to

reduce to a reliable set of actions to be taken in any crisis. Rather, this section is a collection of lessons that crisis managers can draw on when preparing for or managing a crisis. The lessons are arranged using the six areas identified in the crisis communication array. In addition, I have included recommendations and trends. Recommendations are common advice given to crisis managers that have yet to be tested; they are logical and reflect common sense. Trends are emerging practices that lack theory and research but are factors that demand attention. Trends reflect how theory is behind practice in crisis communication.

Figure E.1 Crisis Communication Array

Crisis Phase	Managing Information	Managing Meaning
Precrisis/prevention and preparation		
Crisis response		
Postcrisis/learning		

Precrisis Managing Information

Crisis teams are more effective when they train.

Crisis teams must train with new technology or they will not use the technology during a crisis.

Recommendation: Update the crisis management plan at least annually.

Recommendation: When possible, create a message prior to the crisis to save time.

Recommendation: Prepare dark websites and some social media for use during a crisis.

Precrisis Managing Meaning

- Trend: Social media is increasingly important to crisis scanning and monitoring.
- Trend: Paracrises are increasing in frequency, demanding public crisis prevention.

Crisis Response Managing Information

Ineffective instructing information reduces the effectiveness of the crisis response and threatens public safety.

Websites and social media can be valuable communication channels during a crisis.

- Trend: Technology is increasing the ability of crisis teams to share information even

when they are not in the same location.

- Trend: Sharing information internationally is becoming a greater concern with the rise of international crises.

Crisis Response Managing Meaning

When organizations are the first to report about a crisis, the damage to the reputation is reduced.

"No comment" will be interpreted negatively by stakeholders.

Adjusting information reduces the reputational threat from a crisis.

Apology and compensation are equally effective at protecting reputations.

Crisis responsibility is positively correlated with reputational damage and anger.

Crisis responsibility is negatively correlated with purchase intention.

Increased anger results in a greater likelihood of negative word of mouth.

A negative prior reputation increases the reputational threat from a crisis.

A history of prior crises increases the reputational threat from a crisis.

Appearing pleasant on camera increases credibility and decreases perceived deceptiveness.

Recommendation: Avoid speculating during a crisis.

Recommendation: Create a message map to add clarity and speed to the crisis response.

Recommendation: Use search engine protocols to your advantage in online crisis messages.

Recommendation: Use mass notification systems to save time and lives, and to provide some legal advantages.

Recommendation: Provide counseling to employees and other stakeholders when needed.

Recommendation: Keep all employees informed about the crisis management effort.

- Trend: The challenge of managing meaning is greater across national boundaries with more international crises.

Postcrisis Managing Information

Recommendation: Deliver any information promised to stakeholders during the crisis

response.

- Trend: Social media is increasingly used to provide follow-up information.
- Trend: Social media provides a chance to interact with stakeholders after a crisis.

Postcrisis Managing Meaning

Social media can be used to evaluate stakeholder reaction to a crisis and the organization's crisis response.

Recommendation: Analyze the crisis management effort, and try to facilitate organizational learning.

- Trend: Online memorials are likely to appear after crises.

CONCLUSION

Crisis communication is a dynamic field. Research and practice are constantly adding new ideas that can be valuable to crisis managers. Throughout this book, I have synthesized existing crisis management ideas with some new ideas to produce a communication-based framework for approaching crisis management. The framework is intended to be a tool for integrating the diverse writings and ideas about crisis management into a manageable guide. The crisis management process has been divided into three stages as a way to organize and synthesize the various insights. The three-stage model emphasizes the ongoing nature of the crisis management process and communication demands.

Crisis management never ends. At any given time, the crisis manager is simply working on different parts of the process. I believe the integrative power of this book offers unique insights into crisis management. I hope it has informed your views on the crisis management process.

Crisis Leadership Competencies Box: The Value of Leadership

At their core, crises are threats to organizations. Managers give crises time and attention because of the harm they could inflict on the organization and its stakeholders. The danger is focusing too much on the threat of a crisis and creating a siege mentality. Managers adopt a siege mentality when they only sense the attack on their organization presented by the crisis. Becoming so defensive can lead to poor choices and ineffective crisis communication and management (James & Wooten, 2010). Crisis leaders need to remind the others that there is an opportunity in the crisis as well. An effective response will win praise from stakeholders and, ultimately, benefit the organization and its stakeholders. In addition, the organization can use the crisis to gain insights into how to improve the organization. As noted in Chapter 9, most organizations fail to learn from crises—the opportunity is wasted. Crisis leadership is essential to keeping a focus on the potential to

learn and to grow from the crisis (James & Wooten, 2010). We can say that crisis leadership is the difference between a crisis creating a siege mentality or an opportunity for development.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What types of crises do you feel would be the most difficult to manage? What makes them so difficult to manage?
2. Do you feel that not using new communication technologies in crisis communication will actually hurt a crisis response or simply make an organization look like it is behind the times? What is the true value of new communication technologies to crisis communication?
3. If you could make five recommendations to an organization about crisis communication, what would they be? What is the value of each of your recommendations?
4. What makes managing international crises so difficult?
5. What special communicative challenges are created by international crises?
6. What recommendations would you make to crisis managers about using social media before, during, and after a crisis?
7. Why can a supply chain present so many crisis challenges to an organization?

Appendix

Possible Case Studies

Disney	1997–2005	Boycott by American Family Association	
Union Carbide Corporation	1998	Nitrogen leak and asphyxiation	Hahnville, LA
Morton International	1998	Explosion and fire	Paterson, NJ
Sonat Exploration	1998	Vessel failure	Pitkin, LA
Tosco Corporation	1999	Oil refinery fire	Martinez, CA
Concept Sciences	1999	Hydroxylamine explosion	Allentown, PA
eBay	2000	Computer hacking	
Amazon.com	2000	Computer hacking	
Buy.com	2000	Computer hacking	
NuWood	2001	Workplace violence	Goshen, IN
Wendy's	2001	Challenged by PETA for not meeting animal welfare guidelines	
Bethlehem Steel	2001	Facility fire	Chesterton, IN
BP Amoco	2001	Hot plastic accident	Augusta, GA
Motiva Enterprises	2001	Refinery explosion and fire	Delaware City, DE
Georgia-Pacific	2002	Hydrogen sulfide gas leak	Pennington, AL
Third Coast Industries	2002	Facility fire	Brazoria County, TX
DPC Enterprises	2002	Chlorine transfer hose rupture and release	Festus, MO
Kaltech Industries	2002	Facility explosion	New York, NY
Tyco International	2002	Executives stole money	

(Continued)

Enron	2002	Illegally hid debt from investors	
Adelphia	2002	Illegally hid debt from investors	
WorldCom	2002	Illegally hid debt from investors	
HealthSouth	2002	Illegally hid debt from investors	
First Chemical	2002	Explosion of distillation tower	Pascagoula, MS
Air Midwest	2003	Flight 5481 crashed due to improper maintenance	Charlotte, NC
Lockheed Martin	2003	Workplace violence	Meridian, MS
Chi-Chi's	2003	Hepatitis outbreak	Pittsburgh, PA
BLSR Operating	2003	Vapor cloud fire	Rosharon, TX
D. D. Williamson	2003	Vessel failure	Louisville, KY
Technic	2003	Facility explosion	Cranston, RI
Isotec	2003	Explosion of distillation tower	Miami Township, OH
West Pharmaceutical Services	2003	Facility explosion and fire	Kinston, NC
CTA Acoustics	2003	Facility explosion and fire	Corbin, KY
Honeywell	2003	Chlorine gas release	Baton Rouge, LA
Hayes Lemmerz	2003	Series of explosions at facility	Huntington, IN
DPC Enterprises	2003	Chlorine gas leak	Glendale, AZ
Merck	2004	Heart attacks and strokes from VIOXX	
McDonald's	2004	CEO Jim Cantalupo died of heart attack	
Giant Industries	2004	Gasoline component released and exploded	Gallup, NM
MFG Chemical	2004	Toxic allyl alcohol vapor released	Dalton, GA
Formosa Plastics	2004	Polyvinyl chloride explosion	Illiopolis, IL
Qwest Communications International	2005	Illegally hid debt from investors	
San Francisco 49ers	2005	Improper team media training video	
Acetylene Service Company	2005	Gas explosion	Perth Amboy, NJ
Marcus Oil	2005	Storage tank failure	Houston, TX

BP	2005	Series of explosions at facility	Texas City, TX
Ford Motor Company	2005–2006	Boycott by American Family Association	
Synthron	2006	Facility explosion	Morganton, NC
Cadbury	2006	Food poisoning from chocolate	
Dell, Apple, and Toshiba	2006	Defective laptop batteries	
HP	2006	Unethical means to obtain phone records	
Reebok	2006	Lead in child's bracelet	
Earthbound Farms and Dole	2006	E. coli in spinach	
Princess Cruises	2006	Fire on board a ship	
Princess Cruises	2006	Steering malfunction	
Taco Bell	2006	E. coli in green onions	
JetBlue	2007	Passengers stuck on planes	
Menu Foods	2007	Melamine in pet food recall	
Harry & David	2007	Undeclared nut allergen	
Campbell Soup	2007	Plastic in soup	
Fisher-Price	2007	Entrapment hazard in child's swing	
Polaris Industries	2007	Bearing failure in all-terrain vehicles	
Lowe's	2007	Fire hazard in halogen lights	
Bassettbaby	2008	Entrapment hazard in a crib	
Walmart	2008	Lead poison hazard in charms	
Arctic Cat	2008	Inability to control speed	
Nestlé	2008	Aluminum in strawberry powder	
Matterhorn Group	2008	Plastic in novelty pops	
Bayer CropScience	2008	Facility explosion	Charleston, WV
AstraZeneca	2009	Marketing of Seroquel	
Dole Foods	2009	Lawsuit about *Bananas* film	
Ketchum	2009	Insulted client with tweet	
KFC	2009	Failure to have enough chicken for giveaway	

(Continued)

Peanut Corporations of America	2009	Peanut butter paste recall	
Ryanair	2009	Dispute over BBC interview	
Toyota	2009	Recall over sticking accelerator pedal	
Amazon.com	2009	Deleted books by George Orwell	
Red Bull	2009	Traces of cocaine found in product	
Maclaren	2009	Stroller recall due to finger hazard	
Kellogg	2009	Closed Eggo factory due to contamination	Atlanta, GA
Burger King	2009	Use of Mexican flag in Spanish-language ad	
Apple	2009	Exploding iPhones in Europe	
BP	2010	Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill	Gulf of Mexico
Activision	2010	Fired key executives	
Tesoro	2010	Refinery fire	Anacortes, WA
POM Wonderful	2010	Controversial ads	
Johnson & Johnson	2010	Product recall for smell and contamination	
Royal Caribbean	2010	Quick return to Haiti	
Nestlé	2010	Palm oil conflict with Greenpeace	
H&M	2010	Destroying good clothing rather than donating it	
Pampers	2010	Rumors about products harming babies	
HP	2010	Laptop battery fire hazard	
Hoover	2010	Vacuum recalled for shock hazard	
Kleen Energy	2010	Facility explosion	Middletown, CT
DuPont	2010	Toxic release of phosogene	Belle, WV
Air New Zealand	2010	"Cougar" promotion and video	
Rolls-Royce	2010	Engines made for Airbus A380 leaked oil	
Gap	2010	Fans reacted negatively to new logo	

Starbucks	2011	Fans reacted negatively to new logo	
Groupon	2011	Anger over video of CEO killing an elephant	
Red Cross	2011	Accidental and inappropriate Tweet about staff drinking	
Cargill	2011	Salmonella outbreak from turkey	
Dupont	2011	Recalled herbicide for killing trees	
Dunkin Donuts	2011	Removed ad when scarf in ad said to support terrorism	
JetBlue	2011	Plane stranded on tarmac for 7 hours	Hartford, CT
Versace	2011	Ended practice of sandblasting jeans	
Jensen Farms	2011	Cantaloupe recall for Listeria	
Johnson & Johnson	2011	U.S. government seized production facilities over code violations	Fort Washington, PA; Lancaster, PA
Bic	2012	Protests over the new "Bic for Her" pens	
Starbucks	2012	Protests over taxes paid in the United Kingdom	United Kingdom
Adidas	2012	Protests over not paying Indonesian workers proper severance pay	
Qantas	2012	Cracks in wings of A380 superjumbo plane	
NECC	2012	Vaccine linked to meningitis outbreak	
Splendid Products	2012	Mango recall for Salmonella	
McDonald's	2012	Selling expired and unsafe food	Beijing, China
Carnival Cruise	2012	Sinking of Costa Concordia	Italy
American Apparel	2012	Used Super Storm Sandy hashtag to promote clothing	
Susan G. Komen	2012	Planned to drop Planned Parenthood sponsorship	
Chick-fil-A	2012	President took anti-gay marriage stance	

(Continued)

Subway	2012–2013	"Footlong" sandwich not 12 inches long	
Boeing	2013	Dreamliner grounded for battery dangers	United States and Japan
Primark	2013	Garment factory fire	Bangladesh
Walmart	2013	Garment factory fire	Bangladesh
Zara	2013	Garment factory fire	Bangladesh
Carnival Cruise	2013	Carnival Triumph fire	
Royal Caribbean	2013	Grandeur of the Sea fire	
Wrigley	2013	Stopped production of caffeine gum over FDA health concern for children who might use it	
Danone	2013	Dairy products recalled for aflatoxin levels	Romania
Tesco	2013	Horse meat found in some meat products	
Ikea	2013	Horse meat found in some meatballs	
Reebok	2013	Protests over negative comments its spokesperson Rick Ross made about women	
General Mills	2013	Angry online reaction to Cheerios commercial with biracial couple and their young daughter	
Nike	2013	Protests over use of "slave cotton" from Uzbekistan	
Disney	2013	Closed three rides in Disneyland due to state citations about employee safety protocols	
Exxon-Mobil	2013	Oil spill	Mayflower, AR
ANA	2013	Planes grounded due to Dreamliner battery problem	Japan
Japan Airlines	2013	Planes grounded due to Dreamliner battery problem	Japan

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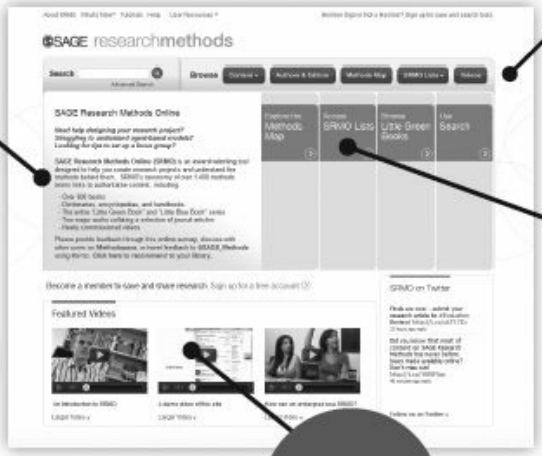

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